



# FOUR DIALOGUES OF PLATO

INCLUDING THE  
"APOLOGY OF SOCRATES"



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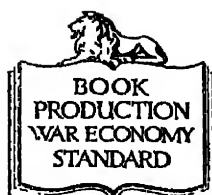
Translations and Notes by  
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TO  
F. A. HAYEK  
MOST LIBERAL OF BOSSES

# JOHN STUART MILL AND THE ANCIENTS

## I

*The Cambridge History of English Literature* states:

John Stuart Mill is, on the whole, the most interesting and characteristic figure in English philosophy in the nineteenth century. . . . For more than a generation Mill's influence was dominant in all departments of philosophical and political thought; he had the initiative, and set the problems for his opponents as well as for his adherents; and his works became university text-books. This holds of politics, economics, ethics, psychology, and logic.<sup>1</sup>

THE following translations and condensations of four of the more popular dialogues of Plato, by J. S. Mill, were first published in the *Monthly Repository* of 1834-1835. They are now rescued from the oblivion in which they have rested for over a hundred years. In addition to these dialogues Mill wrote: Notes on the *Parmenides* (51 pp.), on the *Lyrics* of Plato (26 pp.), on the *Euthyphron* (26 pp.), on the *Charmides* (30 pp.), and on the *Laches* of Plato. The manuscripts of these Notes passed recently through the market, but have never yet been published.

The interest in the dialogues re-published below is threefold:

First, there are the plain contents. To judge of the comparative philological merits of these translations must be left to scholars of Greek; J. S. Mill himself claims that "in the execution they have no pretension to any other merit than that of fidelity."<sup>2</sup> But there can be no doubt that these abstracts are so lively, of such immediate interest to a common reader without knowledge of Greek or of philosophy, that even to-day they fully answer the purpose Mill had in mind: that of transforming the name of "Plato" from a dead word, revered on others' authority, into a living and challenging personality speaking to us and our time.

Every age reads its Plato anew. As with the Bible, Shakespeare, or the Renaissance, the interpretation of Plato varies with the *Zeitgeist*. This constitutes the second interest inherent in J. S. Mill's Notes on Plato: these early revolutionary Victorians,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xiv, p. 22

<sup>2</sup> Subsequent text, p. 44.

“precursors of our age rather . . . than typical of their own”<sup>1</sup>—what did they read into their Plato? In any history of ideas as revealed in interpretations of Plato, John Stuart Mill’s testimony cannot be overlooked.

Mill did not include these Notes on Plato’s Dialogues in his four volumes of reprints *Dissertations and Discussions*. He refers to them only twice. In his *Autobiography* he says:—

Altogether, the writings (independently of those in newspapers) which I published from 1832 to 1834, amount to a large volume. This, however, includes abstracts of several of Plato’s Dialogues, with introductory remarks, which, though not published until 1834, had been written several years earlier; and which I afterwards, on various occasions, found to have been read, and their authorship known, by more people than were aware of anything else which I had written, up to that time.<sup>2</sup>

And in a letter to Carlyle, dated 2nd March, 1834, he mentions:—

The *Repository* is also publishing some notes of mine upon Plato, mostly written long ago, which I thought might be of some interest and perhaps use; chiefly because they do not speculate and *talk about* Plato, but show to the reader Plato himself.<sup>3</sup>

In the literature on Plato’s Dialogues I have not been able to find any mention of them. B. Jowett, in *The Four Socratic Dialogues of Plato*, Oxford, 1903, does not refer to Mill’s previous efforts at translation; H. North Fowler, in his two-volume *Plato*, does not include them in his bibliography of editions of or works on Plato; even Henry Cay, in his *Works of Plato*, published in 1848, only fourteen years after Mill’s translations appeared, does not betray any knowledge of them. Neither are they dealt with in any of the biographies of or essays on J. S. Mill. That these Plato translations by a writer whose English style counts as classic should have been so completely forgotten, both by students of Plato and by students of Mill, is probably owing to their inaccessibility: it is unlikely that there exist more than

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *The Spirit of the Age*, re-edited by F. A. Hayek (Chicago University Press, 1942), Pref., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, quoted from The World’s Classics edition (Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Elliot, *Letters of John Stuart Mill*, vol. i, p. 95.

three copies of them in London. Indeed, the only mention of them occurs in Richard Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox*,<sup>1</sup> the editor of the *Monthly Repository*, in whose pages Mill's Notes on the Dialogues of Plato have been buried for so long.

Thirdly, these Notes are of biographical interest regarding J. S. Mill himself. With J. S. Mill's relation to the classics we concern ourselves in this introduction.

## II

The Utilitarian school of Bentham, James Mill, and their circle of reformer friends, was the chief channel by which the Rationalism of the eighteenth century flowed into the nineteenth.

In 1802 James Mill, the poor young atheist Puritan from Scotland, arrived in London. It is doubtful whether during the following twenty years any other single person exerted the same influence on the progressive side of English political life. This he accomplished without ever holding a public office or belonging to a political party, but by the sheer force of his personality. No man seems to have met James Mill without, to some extent, being directed by him: Bentham, Ricardo, Brougham, Romilly, Joseph Hume, Place, Grote, William Allen, Strutt, Black, Fonblanque, and his son John—all testify to his sway over men's minds. This was due to a powerful intellect coupled with singular energy of character and, also, to great personal charm, which he possessed if he chose to exert it.

He had an industry and a vitality, and a relentless and unsparing devotion to the public cause to which he was attached, which has rarely been equalled. In pursuit of his purpose he spared neither himself nor others. He was exacting, domineering, opinionated, and intolerant of all differences of opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The biography of "this astonishing man, certainly one of the most striking figures in English history,"<sup>2</sup> is as yet unwritten.

It was James Mill who "allied Utilitarianism with the political economy of Malthus and Ricardo, with the associationist psychology of Hartley, with a renewed study of Greek ideas, and with a comprehensive educational system."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur Salter, *John Stuart Mill*, in *The Great Victorians*, Pelican Books, vol ii, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> A. W. Benn, *Modern England*, p. 83.

The direct and indirect influence of James Mill and of his son on English political and economic, on philosophical and ethical thought, and on the theory of psychology and even education, has been frequently and fairly assessed. But the "Hellenizing tendency"<sup>1</sup> of James Mill's mind and its influence has been neglected to a surprising extent. Yet it was through him that the nineteenth-century Humanism was brought into living communion with the classic Humanism from which it derived its moral force.

To achieve this required more original thinking than is apparent to us to-day. The universities of James Mill's youth deserved the blame and more which, forty years later, his son showered upon their instruction in the classics. "Strongholds . . . of all prejudices,"<sup>2</sup> they bestowed

attention upon the various branches of classical acquirement in exactly the reverse order to that which would be observed by persons who valued the ancient authors for what is valuable in them: namely, upon the mere niceties of language first; next, upon a few of the poets; next (but at a great distance), some of the historians; next (but at a still greater interval), the orators; last of all, and just above nothing, the philosophers.<sup>3</sup>

Plato was considered "an impractical dreamer, or, worse still, as the creator of a mystical theology."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, as a student of Divinity at Edinburgh, we find James Mill, in his second session, beginning to read *Platonis Opera*, and for many weeks to follow devoting the better part of his time to their study.<sup>5</sup> For ever after, James Mill remained imbued with the ethical spirit of the ancients. They awakened in him a sustained enthusiasm which, in his estimation, it is quite beyond the power of modern historians to communicate:—

The Ancients, unlike the modern, lay the greatest stress on the lessons of morality in their conception of history, and it is well known that they excel in celebrating public spirit as a high virtue<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Benn, *Modern England*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> L. Stephen, *English Utilitarians*, vol. iii, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequent text, p. 41

<sup>4</sup> A. W. Benn, *English Rationalism*, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> A. Bain, *James Mill*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> James Mill, *Review of Fox's Unfinished History of the Revolution of 1688*.

The re-discovery of the spirit of the Ancients as a moral force, as a power making for character, is all James Mill's own; the Greek scholars of his time betray no knowledge of it. His Greek scholarship was recognized in later years when he was suggested as a candidate for the Greek Chair at Glasgow.

In a curious way James Mill's Puritan heritage of sternness and a high sense of duty blended themselves with Plato's humanism while detaching themselves at the same time from all religious creeds. He gave up the ministry for conscientious reasons and removed to London to rear a growing family by his pen. His character and views of life, thus formed, are described by his son:—

My father's moral convictions, wholly dis severed from religion, were very much of the character of those of the Greek philosophers; and were delivered with the force and decision which characterised all that came from him. . . .

In his views of life he partook of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Cynic, not in the modern, but the ancient sense of the word. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated. His standard of morals was Epicurean, inasmuch as it was utilitarian, taking as the exclusive test of right and wrong, the tendency of actions to produce pleasure or pain. But he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure . . . The greater number of miscarriages in life, he considered to be attributable to the overvaluing of pleasures. Accordingly, temperance, in the large sense intended by the Greek philosophers—stopping short at the point of moderation in all indulgences—was with him, as with them, almost the central point of educational precept. . . .

For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. "The intense" was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great stress laid upon feeling.<sup>1</sup>

This was the man who believed in the possibility and deliberately set himself the task of "making a man" of his first-born son.

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, pp 39–41.



### III

In writing about John Stuart Mill the great difficulty consists in ridding oneself of preconceived ideas: the austere, self-assured teacher of two generations of thinking men and women, the almost impersonal oracle of right and wrong on all questions within his Aristotelean range—this habitual picture, true enough of the late Mill, tends to supersede all the other very different phases in a rich and varied development.

Yet, however extensive the ground covered in his mental growth, there occurred no basic change, either in his character or in his approach to thought and action. His kind of growth was not the complete reversal we find with so many of the free-thinkers of his age. It is, rather, a continuous widening of horizons, a process of farther and farther reaching inclusion. Often this widening comes with the effect of a bursting of the former ring, in which case it imparts to him intense excitement. Indeed, "intellectual ecstasy" is one of the key-words for understanding Mill's character. Still, such new lights breaking cause no "conversion." They call forth a relentless process of checking up against opinions found true formerly. And his end is implicit in his beginning.

There were three distinct periods in J. S. Mill's life. Up to the age of twenty he was the wholly satisfactory product of his father's and Jeremy Bentham's united educational efforts: a zealous young propagandist with the one and only right set of opinions on every subject. There followed about ten years of almost violent reaction against the intellectualism in which he had been brought up. After which Mill settled down to his life's business of integrating the two sides of life and modes of thought; of reconciling progressive Rationalism with the new "Conservatism," as the recently coined phrase went.<sup>1</sup>

Mill has given the summary of his development as reflected in his writings in his preface to his collected minor papers:—

. . . the review of Mr. Sedgwick's Discourse, taken by itself, might give an impression of more complete adhesion to the philosophy of Locke, Bentham, and the eighteenth

<sup>1</sup> The label "Conservative" as a substitute for "Tory" is generally credited to Croker, who used it in an article in the *Quarterly Review* in 1830, after which it seems to have caught on fairly quickly, for only two years later Macaulay refers to it as "a new cant word." Actually, it would seem to have been invented by Canning, who used it in a speech at Liverpool in 1820.

century, than is really the case, and of an inadequate sense of its deficiencies; but that notion will be rectified by the subsequent essays on Bentham and on Coleridge. These, again, if they stood alone, would give just as much too strong an impression of the writer's sympathies with the reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth: but this exaggeration will be corrected by the more recent defence of the "greatest happiness" ethics against Dr. Whewell.<sup>1</sup>

His sensitiveness towards mental stimuli is extreme; his whole organism partakes in the effect. Significantly, the transition between the first and second, and again between the second and third, phase of his development is in each case marked by a serious and protracted nervous crisis.

Mill's "rare capacity of absorbing new ideas made him a kind of focus in which most of the significant changes of thought of his time combined"<sup>2</sup> Thus he became probably the most comprehensive, though not deepest, thinker of his century.

We all know the story, given in the *Autobiography*, of little John learning Greek words by heart in his father's study at the age of three. But in the light of James Mill's relation to the classics, this fact, and the list of Greek books studied subsequently, assumes a different significance: Aesop's *Fables*, the *Anabasis*, Herodotus, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and *Memorials of Socrates*; some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius; part of Lucian, two speeches of Isocrates. In 1813, at the age of seven, he read the first six dialogues (in the common arrangement) of Plato, from the *Euthyphron* to the *Theaetetus* inclusive.<sup>3</sup> All of these were read before John commenced learning Latin, at the age of eight. "By the age of twelve his classical reading covered more than most of those who take a first in the classical school of a university can boast of."<sup>4</sup> But to James Mill these were far from being dry intellectual pursuits. To him these were, indeed, the most *alive* books to be put into the hands of his son. The thoughts and the conduct of these ancients were the highest he could conceive of as moral and intellectual examples, and they were of literally thrilling interest to both father and

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. 1, Pref., pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> F. A. Hayek, *The Spirit of the Age*, Pref., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Arthur Salter, *John Stuart Mill*, p. 312.

son: as a character-forming agency in this wholly secular education Plato's works took, indeed, the place of the Bible.

It required a James Mill to make a success of this scheme of education; and he did. His belief in the moral effect of the classics proved true in the case of his son and destined successor. "His whole life long the younger Mill was glowing through and through with an ethical enthusiasm,"<sup>1</sup> and with a public spirit equalled by few men. J. S. Mill describes how the foundation of this was laid by his father:—

Even at the very early age at which I read with him the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, I imbibed from that work and from his comments a deep respect for the character of Socrates; who stood in my mind as a model of ideal excellence: and I well remember how my father at that time impressed upon me the lesson of the "Choice of Hercules." At a somewhat later period the lofty moral standard exhibited in the writings of Plato operated upon me with great force. My father's moral inculcations were at all times mainly those of the "Socratici viri." . . .<sup>2</sup>

Three of the Socratic virtues which young John learnt in his father's stern school are essential for understanding J. S. Mill's training as well as the subsequent four dialogues. Therefore it will be useful to give the sensitive transcriptions of them rendered by Sir R. W. Livingstone for the English reader without a knowledge of Greek:—

One difficulty in reading Greek in translation is that there is no English equivalent for certain Greek words. Particularly important are three constantly recurring words: *areté*, *sophrosyné*, *dikaiosyné*. They are generally translated "virtue," "temperance," and "justice," and as there are no English equivalents I have left these renderings though they are seriously misleading. The reader, when he meets "virtue," "temperance," and "justice" in the text, should realize that they represent far more profound and fruitful conceptions than the English words suggest.

*Virtue*: To a Greek everything is capable of a "virtue." It achieves it when it is at its best, does the best of which

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Benn, *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 293–295.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 39.

it is capable, serves perfectly the purpose for which it is intended. A knife has a "virtue"—to cut well. A cow has one—to give good and ample milk. A doctor has one—to cure his patients. A teacher has one—to educate his pupils. A journalist has one—to inform and guide the public correctly. An artist has one—to produce good art. So with each thing and creature: each is capable of a "virtue" of its own. And man is capable of many "virtues"—as child, parent, citizen, in his profession or occupation, as a human being with a body, character, and intellect (each capable of its peculiar "virtue" or excellence) <sup>1</sup>

Or, as J. S. Mill expresses it, "intrinsic usefulness."

*Temperance* (to which James Mill gave such extended application): . . . think of this quality as having a range far beyond temperance (as we used the word). *Sophrosyné* stretches out and tends to become the whole of virtue, an inner harmony of the soul, a reasonableness which reveals itself in every action and attitude. It saves the individual from physical excess, from extravagance of thought and word, from the arrogance that exaggerates his capacities, and the ambition that overleaps itself. The Greeks would have found it absent in the drunkard and the debauchee, but also in Luther and Napoleon. . . .

. . . It is, in the literal meaning of the Greek word, "soundness of mind." Restraint is of its essence, but is felt, not as restraint nor as a drag on natural instinct nor as an infringement of liberty, but as that natural service to right reason which is perfect freedom. Indeed *sophrosyné* is, or ought to be, pre-eminently the virtue of an educated man. Plato describes those who possess it by saying that they are "stronger than themselves"; the source of their strength over self is the wisdom that is the essence of *sophrosyné*.<sup>2</sup>

*Justice*: The meaning of *dikaosyné* appears from Plato's definition of its opposite. "I call it injustice when anger and fear, pleasure and pain, jealousies and desires, tyrannize over the soul" (Plato, *Laws*, 863). Clearly "justice" is a very inadequate description of the Greek word. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato, Selected Passages* (Oxford University Press, 1943), Pref., pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Portrait of Socrates*, Introd., pp. 55-56.

the nearest English equivalent is the old-fashioned word "righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

With these virtues in view as aims for his son's education, and the instruction in the classics at the universities being what it was, it is little to be wondered at that James Mill was not to be moved to send his son to Trinity College at Cambridge, as a friend of the family, Professor Townsend of Cambridge, repeatedly urged him to do.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to Bain's opinion, I believe that John shared his father's view on the question, as he shared almost all his views at this time.

But in spite of all the debt J. S. Mill's mental make-up owed to Plato's writings, it is obvious that only one aspect of them penetrated to his consciousness. He, like James Mill, was a follower of Socrates rather than of Plato. It was Socrates' moral force and Socrates' philosophical *method* which alone they absorbed from Plato's writings; so much so that they denied the existence even of a philosophical system of Plato's own.<sup>3</sup> Thus the mystical or spiritual philosophy of Plato, on which through the ages "Platonists" have drawn, was, as it were, by-passed by them. Plato's winged chariot of the soul, which to the mystics of all times has remained a living reality, was to John Mill no more than a myth, or even a figure of speech.

Also the poetical contents of what he read seem not to have struck home at this first stage: he relates, in his *Autobiography*, that he first relished Homer in Pope's English translation. The poetical spirit of Plato's writings came as something new to him in the second phase of his mental development, after he had become attuned to poetry.

Socrates' "central doctrine was that goodness is knowledge, that if a man knows what is right he will do it, and that the secret of success in life is to have clear and true ideas about it."<sup>4</sup> Or, as J. S. Mill puts it, "the absolute identity of knowledge and virtue."<sup>5</sup> This was the essence of James Mill's Plato. This was the spirit which animated the early Victorian reformers, nearly all of them Humanists, and every one of them believing implicitly

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bain, *John Stuart Mill*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Text, p. 42. For a summary of Plato's philosophy see Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref., pp. 15-17.

<sup>4</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Text, p. 66.

in the power of education and institutions to alter individual character and society as a whole. This spirit was a union (far more than has as yet been analysed) between eighteenth-century Rationalism and a new nineteenth-century conception of classical Humanism.<sup>1</sup>

Fortified by lack of contact with other boys of his age, John took these convictions and his classical ideals for granted much as a youth reared in a religious atmosphere would accept its basic implications. With the history and ideas of Greece far more familiar to him and more vividly inscribed on his imagination than the history of his own country,<sup>2</sup> he, at the age of sixteen, steps as an ardent adjutant beside his father as a force in English political life. From the winter of 1821, when he first read Bentham, till the autumn of 1826, which marked the beginning of his spiritual crisis, he had one object in life: "to be a reformer of the world."<sup>3</sup>

The quaint youth, with his over-clear reasoning power, all his emotional drive behind Benthamite reform ideas which he proclaims modestly, yet with complete assurance, in a rather shrill voice, makes his mark from the outset. James Mill had gathered about himself a group of gifted young men, of whom nearly every one was to make a name for himself in nineteenth-century history. Although the youngest of the set, leadership fell to John Mill naturally.

In spite of the fact that Mill devotes over one-third of his *Autobiography* to this first phase of his life, the history of these four years has yet to be written. We learn by whom and by what he was influenced, but little about the influence he himself exerted.

Yet before he was twenty years of age he had contributed to the public press about fifty letters, reviews, articles. Most of his writings between 1822 and 1824 appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, some in the *Traveller* and in the *Globe*. From 1824 the bulk of his writings went into the *Westminster Review*; some appeared in the *Parliamentary Review*. According to the custom of his time, he wrote under a great many pen-names. But now, as later, many of his weightier contributions appeared over the signature of "A." or, fully, "Antiquus." As an "Antiquus" John Mill stepped into the political arena. From antiquity, as

<sup>1</sup> It would be worth while to trace the influence of these men on the change in the teaching of the classics in English universities. James Mill and George Grote took a prominent part in the formation of London University, which in turn influenced the other civic universities.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112

conceived by him, he derived his standards of judgment of contemporary events. In order to signify that he meant to look forward as well as backward, he later discarded the "A." for "A.B."

#### IV

The mental crisis of which Mill gives such a moving account in his *Autobiography* began in the autumn of 1826. This is not the place to grapple with its roots or its significance. Enough to say that, like Goethe in a like spiritual crisis taking physical forms, he emerged from it a changed person.

It is not certain when these translations of Plato's Dialogues were written. Mill himself says only that they were done some years previous to their publication in 1834-1835. Richard Garnett<sup>1</sup> states that they were written four years before, in 1830; whether this is based on the authority of unpublished letters from Mill to W. J. Fox I know not. The translations were not originally intended for publication; they were written as an exercise and for self-elucidation.<sup>2</sup> To me his abstracts read like an attempt, made during his dejection, to recapture some of the glowing response which Plato's writings had formerly evoked in him. Was he merely "a stick or stone," or had, perhaps, the highest kept the power of touching him? He states that his capacity for work was not altogether obstructed during his eclipse. He was dragging on mechanically, by the mere force of habit. "I had been so drilled in a certain sort of mental exercise, that I could still carry it on when all the spirit had gone out of it."<sup>3</sup> The preparation of abstracts under his father's censorship had been an important part of his drill; they were modelled upon Bentham's "marginal notes" as exercises in clear thinking. To John, in the throes of deep melancholia, groping about with lost hope for something to stir mind or heart, yet driven on by a *habit* of work which in later years was to develop into a complete inability ever to stop the activity of the mind, this half-mechanical transcribing into English must easily have appealed.

The view that these abstracts date before 1830 is supported by the fact that the years from 1830 onwards were bristful of new interests and activities. To his newly awakened sensitivity the world of poetry opened out. Through his recently won friends,

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of W. J. Fox*, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Text, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 118

Sterling and Maurice, he grew to comprehend Coleridge and what he later called the Germano-Coleridgian school. Macaulay's attack on James Mill's *Theory of Government* for the first time caused him to reject on a major point his father's opinion as ultimate standard. St. Simonism and Comte's works fascinated him. In 1830 he sketches "in a flash" his first ideas for his *Logic*. He writes his *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*. At the same time he throws himself with new-born vitality into the political struggles of the day for Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. He writes in the *Morning Chronicle*; and after his enthusiastic rush to Paris at the news of the July revolution in 1830, he becomes the leading English writer, mostly in the *Examiner*, on contemporary French politics. He meets and forms his friendship with Carlyle.

J. S. Mill was induced to contribute to the *Monthly Repository* by Harriet Taylor. He had met Harriet Taylor in 1831, never to leave the compass of her influence again. The story of this relationship is as yet unwritten: it is probably at once the most conventional and the most unconventional love-story of Victorian times.

John Taylor, city merchant, and his wife Harriet, were friends and supporters of W. J. Fox, editor of the *Monthly Repository*. It seems even likely that John Taylor, at the instigation of his wife, financed Fox's purchase of the review from the Unitarian Association in 1831.

Fox's editorship of the *Monthly Repository* for the next six years

. . . forms in one respect an era in the history of English periodical literature, for it was the first endeavour to establish a monthly magazine corresponding to the great quarterlies in general elevation and seriousness of tone. *Blackwood*, *Fraser* (only just come into being) and *The New Monthly* were full of excellent reading, and frequently contained essays and fiction of first-class merit; yet a large proportion of their contents was designedly light and jocular, nor were they steadily animated by any lofty purpose. The only serious mission of *Blackwood* and *Fraser* seemed to be to bolster up Toryism; but even this was pursued in a spasmodic fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Fox trusted that there would be room for a monthly periodical systematically propagating those ideas in politics and literature

<sup>1</sup> Richard Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox*, p. 95



which we have come to regard as representative of that age, but which at their time were certainly not considered so by the bulk of the reading public. Moreover, the *Repository* "had a past." Although Fox succeeded in throwing off all sectarianism, the periodical was persistently regarded as Unitarian.

In addition to Mill, Fox counted among his contributors: Robert Browning, Charles Lamb, James and Harriet Martineau, H. Crabb-Robinson, Dr. Southwood Smith, John Bowring, John James Tayler, Sarah Austin, Walter Savage Landor, Robert Nicoll, and R. H. Horne (who succeeded Fox as editor).

Robert Browning and Tennyson found their first recognition in the *Repository*. H. Crabb-Robinson's series on Goethe was the earliest systematic introduction of Goethe to England, and compares to great advantage with the perfunctory notices appearing upon his death in the *Examiner*.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the six volumes of Fox's editorship make lively reading to-day. Thus, like the weekly *Examiner*, of equally advanced notions, the *Monthly Repository* struggled on with a small but select circle of readers. Mill's contributions to it ended in 1835, soon after he began editing the *London Review*.

Probably Mill's best writings of these years appeared in the *Monthly Repository*. His two articles "On Poetry" were reprinted in his *Dissertations and Discussions*; so was his review of Alison's *French Revolution*. His papers on Blackey's *History of Moral Science*, on Bulwer's *England and the English*, and *On Punishment*, as well as his copious *News of the Newspapers*—all breathe his new spirit and animation, shared by the adored Harriet. In a letter to Fox he calls one of these articles "hers." She certainly inspired and materially directed his thinking. As formerly he had thought, worked, agitated, in order to win his father's approval, so now he wrote for her. There can be little doubt that Harriet Taylor was one of "the friends . . . unacquainted with the writings of Plato"<sup>2</sup> who, unexpectedly, found an interest in Mill's abstracts of these Dialogues and urged their publication.

From their contents it is clear that part at least of his introductory Notes to the Dialogues were written upon their publication in 1834. By then he was on the height of his

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Carlyle, Mill wrote in 1832: "So rare in this country is any, even the most commonplace, knowledge of Germany, that none of the other papers gave any observations at all on the extinction of the greatest man then living in Europe." H. Elliot, *Letters of John Stuart Mill*, vol. i, p. 29

<sup>2</sup> Text, p. 44.

“nineteenth-century reaction against the eighteenth.” The biographical interest of these Notes consists in the additional light they throw upon this phase of his development. Any student of the origins of Mill’s *Logic* must be fascinated by the few pages concluding the *Phaedrus*, which are no less than a systematic essay on the history of philosophy in the shortest form <sup>1</sup>

But the essence of Mill’s new ideas comes out in the passages concluding the *Gorgias*.<sup>2</sup> Here James Mill’s Plato, standing for the absolute identity of knowledge and virtue, has been discarded. Argument, knowledge, may show what particular course of conduct is required—

. . . but no arguments . . . have power to make those love or desire virtue, who do not already: nor is this ever to be effected through the intellect, but through the imagination and the affections.

Yet, in the same breath, Mill re-asserts Plato’s power of inspiring us to a virtuous life. Not indeed by argument:—

The love of virtue, and every other noble feeling, . . . we acquire, . . . lastly, from those who, as poets or artists, can clothe those feelings in the most beautiful forms, and breathe them into us through our imagination and our sensations. It is thus that Plato has deserved the title of a great moral writer.<sup>3</sup>

This is no longer the pupil of James Mill; this is the John Stuart Mill writing, to whom beauty and feeling have opened out as new conclusively valid values.

Still more strongly appears his attitude towards the Greeks at this stage in the remarkable, almost passionate, piece of writing which is included in this edition. The letter was published as Mill’s first contribution to the *Monthly Repository* in 1832, and entitled by Fox “On Genius”<sup>4</sup> With education under discussion as it is to-day, this assessment of the formative value of the classics is well worth reconsidering. It is a eulogy of education as understood during “the bright days of Greece,” and, incidentally, of James Mill’s training of his son:—

Education, *then* . . . was a series of exercises to form the

<sup>1</sup> Text, pp 102–106.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168–171.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28

thinking faculty itself, that the mind, being active and vigorous, might go forth and know.<sup>1</sup>

. . . the studies of the closet were combined with, and were intended as a preparation for, the pursuit of active life.<sup>2</sup>

This union of theory and practice . . . produced that rare combination which distinguishes the great minds of that glorious people—of profound speculation, and business-like matter-of-fact common-sense.<sup>3</sup>

The end of education is not to *teach*, but to fit the mind for learning from its own consciousness and observation. . . . Let all the cram [of modern education] be ruthlessly discarded. . . . Let the feelings of society cease to stigmatise independent thinking. . . .<sup>4</sup>

The whole flavour of this article is that of the only real classic Mill has left behind: his book *On Liberty*, which he wrote and re-wrote together with his wife. This paper "On Genius," the first one to be written "for her," must, indeed, be considered the first conception of *On Liberty*.

In his paper "On Civilization," appearing four years later in the *London and Westminster Review*,<sup>5</sup> Mill gives as his deliberate opinion that one of the strongest regenerative forces for our present society would be a real intimate contact with the history and ideas of Greece:—

The very cornerstone of an education intended to form great minds, must be the recognition of the principle, that the object is to call forth the greatest possible quantity of intellectual *power*, and to inspire the intense *love of truth*; and this without a particle of regard to the results to which the exercise of that power may lead, even though it should conduct the pupil to opinions diametrically opposite to those of his teacher.<sup>6</sup>

. . . Ancient literature would fill a large place in such a course of instruction; because it brings before us the thoughts and actions of many great minds, minds of many various orders of greatness, and these related and exhibited in a manner tenfold more impressive, tenfold more calculated to call forth high aspirations, than in any modern literature.

Text, p. 36. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36 <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37 <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.  
April 1836, reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. 1, p. 201.  
*Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. 1, p. 201.

Imperfectly as these impressions are made by the current modes of classical teaching, it is incalculable what we owe to this, the sole ennobling feature in the slavish, mechanical thing which the moderns call education. Nor is it to be forgotten among the benefits of familiarity with the monuments of antiquity, and especially those of Greece, that we are taught by it to appreciate and to admire intrinsic greatness, amidst opinions, habits, and institutions most remote from ours; and are thus trained to that large and catholic toleration, which is founded on understanding, not on indifference—and to a habit of free, open sympathy with powers of mind and nobleness of character, howsoever exemplified. Were but the languages and literature of antiquity so taught that the glorious images they present might stand before the student's eyes as living and glowing realities—that, instead of lying a *caput mortuum* at the bottom of his mind, like some foreign substance in no way influencing the current of his thoughts or the tone of his feelings, they might circulate through it, and become assimilated and be part and parcel of himself!—then we should see how little these studies have yet done for us, compared with what they have yet to do.<sup>1</sup>

## V

Each generation cannot but read the history of Greece and Plato's writings under the impact of its own political experiences. Which was the "historic situation" of Socrates and of Plato?

In the political drama of the 5th century [B.C.] there are three Acts. The first, concluded before the birth of Socrates but still vivid in men's minds, was the Persian attempt to make Greece a province of an Oriental monarchy, which the Greek states . . . had successfully united to repel. The second Act was the rise of Athens to the moral and intellectual leadership of Greece, the formation of an Athenian Empire. . . . The third Act was a coalition of rival Greek states which were jealous of Athenian power, and the so-called Peloponnesian War beginning in 431 and ending in 404 with the overthrow of Athens; Sparta, Corinth, Thebes,

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertations and Discussions*, pp 202–203.

and the rest uniting to destroy a neighbour whose domination they feared <sup>1</sup>

It was conquered Athens that produced Plato and Aristotle. Plato wrote his account of Socrates after the great turning-point in Grecian history: the subjugation of Athens by Sparta and her confederates. The traditional social structure supporting the Athenian Empire which rested on the authority of the old Athenian families had given way to an unrestricted democracy. The regime depended on the masses, who were kept in good humour by "*panem and circenses*"

"The democratic regime of the time was generally detested," writes Plato in a letter as a young man. When the victory of Sparta showed up its weakness "a revolution took place headed by a supreme committee of thirty. Some of the members of this supreme committee were relations or acquaintances of mine and invited me to join them, imagining that I would find the new regime to my taste. . . . I thought that it would substitute the reign of justice for the reign of injustice, and so I gave it my closest attention to see what it would do. And I saw these gentlemen within a very short time make the democracy they had destroyed seem like a golden age! I was deeply disgusted and dissociated myself entirely from this deplorable government." <sup>2</sup>

The Thirty, while masquerading as the old aristocracy which had made Athens great, constituted in fact an oligarchy entering into the arena of ruthless political fight for the greatest share. They kept up their regime only by the most sanguinary tyranny. Aristophanes is speaking truly for the old responsible families, but his voice is not heard. There was a rapid reaction in feeling, and after eight months the regime of the Thirty was overthrown. The exiles, subsequently known at Athens as "those from Piraeus," re-established democracy. Under the tolerance of Sparta, Athens was restored to internal freedom, though denuded of empire. The democracy thus formed was to last for nearly eighty years.

"Once again," Plato's letter continues, "I was filled with a desire to take an active part in politics. It was not sur-

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Portrait of Socrates*, Pref., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref., p. 10.

prising that those revolutionary times resulted in personal reprisals of a violent character: but on the whole the restored democracy exercised considerable moderation. And yet, as ill-luck would have it, certain influential persons brought an action against Socrates. The charge was an outrageous one, of which Socrates was completely innocent. They accused him of irreligion, and on this count the jury condemned him to death

“When I considered all this, the type of men who were administering affairs, and the condition of the law and of public morality—the more I considered it and the older I grew, the more difficult appeared to me the task of decent government. Traditions of conduct and the actual observance of the law alike were degenerating in Athens with surprising rapidity, and when I saw how chaotic the political situation was, I felt completely baffled.”<sup>1</sup>

Plato “had hoped to reform the democracy, but his own oligarchic friends proved worse than the regime they had replaced; and the democracy, when it recovered power, put to death the teacher of whom he says, ‘of all the men of his time whom I have known he was the wisest, the most righteous and the best.’”<sup>2</sup> This is, in short, the story of how Plato was led away from active politics into the life of meditation on them to which we owe his writings.

Like ourselves to-day, Mill saw his own time mirrored in Athens’ history; and so did his Tory adversaries. Sir R. W. Livingstone writes:—

The crisis which Plato had to face was much more than political, and it so closely resembles our own, both in its causes and its phenomena, as to be of special interest to us. In brief it was the crisis of a civilisation, whose traditional beliefs had been destroyed by scientific thought, and whose fabric had been still further shattered by a great war. . . . It was also an age of spiritual confusion and unrest. Intellectual criticism had begun by upsetting current beliefs about the universe, and then turning to religion, morals, and politics had been equally destructive there. . . .

This was the world into which Plato was born. Its civilisa-

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

tion was shaken to its foundations. His work was to restore it.<sup>1</sup>

This is exactly how Mill conceived of his own age—only, on the whole, upon a note of optimism. The entire series of his essays entitled *The Spirit of the Age*<sup>2</sup> proclaim: “Ours is an age of change.”

The wisdom of ancestors, and the march of intellect, are bandied from mouth to mouth; each phrase originally an expression of respect and homage, each ultimately usurped by the partisans of the opposite catch-word, and in the bitterness of their spirit, turned into a sarcastic jibe of hatred and insult.<sup>3</sup> . . . .

The first of the leading peculiarities of the present age is that it is an age of transition. Mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones.<sup>4</sup>

In this second stage of his development Mill had advanced from a pure advocate of “the march of intellect” side to a full appreciation of ancestral wisdom. But this does not make him any more patient with the Tory conceptions of Greek history:—

The Professor [Sedgwick] seems wholly unaware of the importance of accuracy, either in thought or in expression. “In ancient history,” says he (p. 42), “we can trace the fortunes of mankind under almost every condition of political and social life.” So far is this from being true, that ancient history does not so much as furnish an example of a civilised people in which the bulk of the inhabitants were not slaves. Again, “all the successive actions we contemplate are at such a distance from us, that we can see their true bearings on each other undistorted by that mist of prejudice with which every modern political question is surrounded.” We appeal to all who are conversant with the modern writings on ancient history, whether even this is true. The most elaborate Grecian history which we possess<sup>5</sup> is impregnated with the anti-Jacobin spirit in every line; and the *Quarterly Review*

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, pp 12–13

<sup>2</sup> Originally published in *The Examiner* in 1831, recently re-edited by F. A. Hayek (Chicago University Press, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp 1–2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p 6.

<sup>5</sup> Mitford's *Greek History*, published 1784–1810

laboured as diligently for many years to vilify the Athenian republic as the American <sup>1</sup>

And were not James Mill and his circle carrying their intellectual criticism into all the current beliefs about politics, morals, religion, such as the "Sophists" of old had done? Were they not, like the Sophists, decried by all defenders of ancestral wisdom? In the Notes we see J. S. Mill take up the cudgels on behalf of the Sophists against "certain Church of England writers" with direct reference to the fate of philosophers of his own time:—

With regard to the Sophists . . . all that is really known of them tends to throw great doubt upon their having, as a class, really deserved that degree of obloquy. All inquirers into abstract truth, except mathematicians—all who were afterwards called philosophers . . . had, before . . . been confounded together under that older name [of Sophists]: and such are seldom popular with the mass of mankind; witness the House of Commons, and most public assemblies in this country.<sup>2</sup>

Inquirers into abstract truth is what the Sophists were, and as such they were regarded as of ill-repute by public opinion. The greatest of them is Socrates.

The "Trial of Socrates" has been tested by various thinkers before the judgment of history. Louis Menard and Georges Sorel in France, Friedrich Nietzsche in Germany, while paying tribute to his heroism in facing death, considered his death sentence in accordance with historical justice. Several modern Socialist writers have seen in Socrates a traitor against Athenian democracy.

To Mill he is

. . . a philosopher inculcating, under a supposed religious impulse, pure reason and a rigid discipline of the logical faculty. . . . Socrates, in morals, is . . . the parallel of Bacon in physics. He exposed the loose, vague, confused, and misleading character of the common notions of mankind on the most familiar subjects. By apt interrogations, forcing the interlocutors to become conscious of the want of pre-

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *Professor Sedgwick's "Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge,"* *London Review*, April 1835; reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. i, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Text, p. 45.



cision in their own ideas, he showed that the words in popular use on all moral subjects (words which, because they are familiar, all persons fancy they understand) in reality answer to no distinct and well-defined ideas; and that the common notions, which those words serve to express, all require to be reconsidered. This is exactly what Bacon showed to be the case with respect to the phrases and notions commonly current on physical subjects. It is the fashion of the day to decry negative dialectics; as if making men conscious of their ignorance were not the first step—and an absolutely necessary one—towards inducing them to acquire knowledge. . . . The war which Bacon made upon confused general ideas . . . was essentially negative, but it constituted the epoch from which alone advancement in positive knowledge became possible. It is to Bacon that we owe Newton, and the modern physical science. In like manner Socrates, by convincing men of their ignorance, and pointing out the conditions of knowledge, originated the positive movement which produced Plato and Aristotle. With them and their immediate disciples that movement ceased, and has never yet been so effectually revived as to be permanent. The common notions of the present time on moral and mental subjects are as incapable of supporting the Socratic cross-examination as those of his own age: they are, just as much, the wild fruits of the undisciplined understanding . . . rough generalisations of first impressions, or consecrations of accidental feelings, without due analysis or mental circumscription.<sup>1</sup>

Socrates, to Mill, is “a man unique in history, of a kind at all times needful, and seldom more needed than now.”<sup>2</sup> He is, indeed, in the ancient world, the “saint and martyr”<sup>3</sup> of man’s right of free inquiry. As such he is put to death.

Thus, although J. S. Mill at this stage has come to assimilate the to him hitherto foreign values of conservative thinking, of continuity in history, of tradition—we yet find that, with him, the undoubtedly far superior value is the right of free inquiry after truth; “or, as Socrates expressed it in words equally simple and profound, to follow the argument where it leads.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. II, p. 511, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Plato*, Pref., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Sir R. W. Livingstone, *Portrait of Socrates*, Pref., p. 6.

In fact, what Mill urges, at this stage, against his old Benthamite associates is just their limitation, their barring themselves against the other half of truth; their being committed to "the march of intellect" to the exclusion of recognition of the wisdom of tradition. Though, eventually, Mill retraced part of the way he now went, we find him throughout living up to his postulate of the right of unrestricted inquiry after truth, regardless of results and whether these differed from his own or not. This was his guiding principle while editing the *Westminster Review*, 1834-1840; it will be difficult to find another periodical allowing for equally diverse opinions. He actually delighted in perusing young authors' manuscripts, regardless of their opinions, and said that he was able to recognize intellectual honesty at once from a person's handwriting.

In the whole re-valuation which J. S. Mill's standards underwent during the decade when he went farthest from the doctrines of his youth, we find, then, that his estimation of the life and thought of Greece, and of her heritage to us, has, if anything, risen. While generally, at this stage, he is ready to shed former values, to denounce former praise, antiquity not only stands the test of changed sensibilities in him, but is newly revealed in hitherto unnoticed perfections. Where formerly Greece, in her best times, represented to him mental and moral excellence, she now stands, in addition, for unsurpassed beauty, health of feelings—for genius.

## VI

Years later J. S. Mill reiterates his appraisal of Greek culture, and of its significance for our own, in ripe and emphatic language in his *Inaugural Address* at St. Andrews University and in his reviews of George Grote's *History of Greece*.

The fact that Mill reviewed the work of this eminent Greek scholar in the *Edinburgh Review*, and the value George Grote attached to his judgment, are in themselves valid proof of J. S. Mill's proficiency in yet another field, in addition to those in which we are used to considering him an authority. His review of Grote's first two volumes came out upon their publication in 1846 under the title *Early Grecian History and Legend*.<sup>1</sup> Volumes

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1846, reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. II, pp. 283 ff

9–11 were reviewed by him in 1853.<sup>1</sup> The reviews of the intermediate volumes were not written by Mill. In 1862 he intends to review Grote's *Plato et Viri Socratici*.

To Mill, at forty, with his *Logic* (1843) and his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) meeting with a totally unexpected success, the

. . . interest of Grecian history is unexhausted and inexhaustible. As a mere story, hardly any other portion of authentic history can compare with it. Its characters, its situations, the very march of its incidents are epic. It is a heroic poem, of which the personages are peoples. It is also, of all histories of which we know so much, the most abounding in consequences to us who now live. The true ancestors of the European nations (it has been well said) are not those from whose blood they are sprung, but those from whom they derive the richest portion of their inheritance. The battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings. If the issue of that day had been different, the Britons and Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods.

The Greeks are also the most remarkable people who have yet existed. Not, indeed, if by this be meant those who have approached nearest . . . to the perfection of social arrangement, or of human character. Their institutions, their way of life, even that which is their greatest distinction, the cast of their sentiments and development of their faculties, were radically inferior to the best . . . products of modern civilisation. It is not the results achieved, but the powers and efforts required to make the achievement, that measure their greatness as a people. They were the beginners of nearly everything, Christianity excepted, of which the modern world makes its boast. . . . They alone among nations, so far as is known to us, emerged from barbarism by their own efforts, not following in the track of any more advanced people. . . . They were . . . the originators of political freedom, and the grand exemplars and sources of it to modern Europe. . . .

They were the first people who had a historical literature; as perfect of its kind . . . as their oratory, their poetry,

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1853, reprinted *ibid.*, vol. ii, pp 510 ff.

their sculpture, and their architecture. They were the founders of mathematics; of physics; of the inductive study of politics, so early exemplified in Aristotle; of the philosophy of human nature and life. . . .

With a religious creed eminently unfavourable to speculation, because affording a ready supernatural solution of all natural phenomena, they yet originated freedom of thought. They, the first, questioned nature and the universe by their rational faculties, and brought forth answers not suggested by any established system of priestcraft; and their free and bold spirit of speculation it was, which, surviving in its results, broke the yoke of another enthralling system of popular religion, sixteen hundred years after they had ceased to exist as a people.

These things were effected in two centuries of national existence.<sup>1</sup>

At forty-seven, with his name gradually rising to world renown, taking up the same trend of thought, Mill says:—

From the legislation of Solon to the field of Marathon, a hundred years of preparation; from Marathon to Chaeroneia, barely a hundred and fifty years of maturity—that century and a half is all that separates the earliest recorded prose writing from Demosthenes and Aristotle, all that lies between the first indication to the outer world of what Greece was destined to be, and her absorption by a foreign conqueror. A momentous interval, which decided for an indefinite period the question, whether the human race was to be stationary or progressive. That the former condition is far more congenial to ordinary human nature than the latter, experience unfortunately places beyond doubt; and history points out no other people in the ancient world who had any spring of unborrowed progress within themselves. We have no knowledge of any other source from which freedom and intellectual cultivation could have come, any other means by which the light never since extinguished might have been kindled, if the world had been left, without any elements of Grecian origin, to be fought for between the unlettered Romans and the priest-led and despot-governed Asiatics. The people and the period on which this depended,

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. ii, pp. 281–285.

must be important to posterity as long as any portion of the past continues to be remembered. . . .<sup>1</sup>

And to Mill at sixty-one, speaking as the accepted teacher of his country and beyond its borders, when addressing the students of St. Andrews, Hellenic studies seem as essential as when, as a child, under his father's guidance, his whole being thrilled to this people's adventures in history.

But the superiority of [classical] literature itself, for purposes of education, is still more marked and decisive. . . . The treasure which they accumulated of what may be called the wisdom of life: the rich store of experience of human nature and conduct, which the acute and observing minds of those ages, aided in their observations by the greater simplicity of manners and life, consigned to their writings, and most of which retains all its value. . . .

And the actual truths we find . . . are even surpassed in value by the encouragement and help they gave us in the pursuit of truth. Human invention has never produced anything so valuable, in the way both of stimulation and discipline to the inquiring intellect, as the dialectics of the ancients, of which many of the works of Aristotle illustrate the theory, and those of Plato exhibit the practice. . . .

In purely literary excellence—in perfection of form—the pre-eminence of the ancients is not disputed. . . . As regards substance, I consider modern poetry to be superior to ancient, in the same manner, though in a less degree, as modern science: it enters deeper into nature. . . . The modern mind is, what the ancient mind was not, brooding and self-conscious; and its meditative self-consciousness has discovered depths in the human soul which the Greeks and Romans did not dream of, and would not have understood. But what they had got to express, they expressed in a manner which few even of the greatest moderns have seriously attempted to rival. . . .

The noblest enthusiasm, both for the search after truth and for applying it to its highest uses, pervades these writers, Aristotle no less than Plato, though Plato has incomparably the greater power of imparting those feelings to others.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol ii, pp. 516 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Inaugural Address at St. Andrews*, 1867, pp. 31-34.

Throughout his long life John Stuart Mill's estimation and interpretation of the ancients never varies deeply. To this thinker of nineteenth-century liberalism Antiquity is, in every phase of his development, an object of marvel: "speaking to him in every condition." Yet, though the contents of his praise and appraisal keep much the same throughout, we detect a change in tone—the same change that pervades all the writings of Mill, the elderly man:—

There was a strange half-  
absence, as of one  
Knowing too well the importance  
of his theme,  
But feeling it no longer. . . .

## JOHN STUART MILL "ON GENIUS" \*

SIR—

You have turned your attention, and that of the readers of the *Monthly Repository*, to a question, with which, if we well consider its significance, none of the controversies which fill the present age with flame and fury is comparable in interest. You have shown that, without being indifferent to politics, you can see a deeper problem in the existing aspect of human affairs, than the adjustment of a ten-pound franchise; and that with no inclination to undervalue the intellect of these "latter days," you do not write it down transcendent because steam-carriages can run twenty-five miles an hour on an iron railway; because little children are taught to march round a room and sing psalms, or because mechanics can read the *Penny Magazine*. You do not look upon man as having attained the perfection of his nature, when he attains the perfection of a wheel's or a pulley's nature, to go well as a part of some vast machine, being in himself nothing. You do not esteem the higher endowments of the intellect and heart to be given by God, or valuable to man, chiefly as means to his obtaining, first, bread; next, beef to his bread; and, as the last felicitous consummation, wine and fine linen. Rather, you seem to consider the wants which point to these bodily necessities or indulgences, as having for their chief use that they call into existence and into exercise those loftier qualities. You judge of man, not by what he does, but by what he is. For, though man is formed for action, and is of no worth further than by virtue of the work which he does; yet (as has been often said, by one of the noblest spirits of our time) the works which most of us are appointed to do on this earth are in themselves little better than trivial and contemptible: the sole thing which is indeed valuable in them is the *spirit* in which they are done. Nor is this mere mysticism; the most absolute utilitarianism must come to the same conclusion. If life were aught but a struggle to overcome difficulties; if the multifarious labours of the *durum genus*

\* Addressed to the Author of an Article, entitled "Some Considerations respecting the Comparative Influence of Ancient and Modern Times on the Development of Genius"; and of its continuation, headed, "On the Intellectual Influences of Christianity," *Monthly Repository*, Oct. 1832.

*hominum* were performed for us by supernatural agency, and there were no demand for either wisdom or virtue, but barely for stretching out our hands and enjoying, small would be our enjoyment for there would be nothing which man could any longer prize in man. Even men of pleasure know that the means are often more than the end: the delight of fox-hunting does not consist in catching the fox. Whether, according to the ethical theory we adopt, wisdom and virtue be precious in themselves, or there be nothing precious save happiness, it matters little; while we know that where these higher endowments are not, happiness can never be, even although the purposes for which they might seem to have been given, could, through any mechanical contrivance, be accomplished without them.

To one who believes these truths, and has obtained thus much of insight into what the writer to whom I have already alluded would call "the significance of man's life," it was a fitting inquiry what are really the intellectual characteristics of this age; whether our mental light—let us account for the fact as we may—has not lost in intensity, at least a part of what it has gained in diffusion; whether our "march of intellect" be not rather a march towards doing without intellect, and supplying our deficiency of giants by the united efforts of a constantly increasing multitude of dwarfs. Such, too, is actually the problem which you have proposed. Suffer, then, one who has also much meditated thereon, to represent to you in what points he considers you to have failed in completely solving, and even in adequately conceiving the question.

Have you not misplaced the gist of the inquiry, and confined the discussion within too narrow bounds, by countenancing the opinion which limits the province of genius to the discovery of truths never before known, or the formation of combinations never before imagined? Is not this confounding the mere *accidents* of genius with its essentials, and determining the order of precedence among minds, not by their powers, but by their opportunities and chances? Is genius any distinct faculty? Is it not rather the very faculty of thought itself? And is not the act of *knowing* anything not directly within the cognisance of our senses (provided we really *know* it, and do not take it upon trust) as truly an exertion of genius, though of a less *degree* of genius, as if the thing had never been known by any one else?

Philosophic genius is said to be the discovery of new truth. But what is new truth? That which has been known a thousand



years may be new truth to you or me. There are born into the world every day several hundred thousand human beings, to whom all truth whatever is new truth. What is it to him who was born yesterday, that somebody who was born fifty years ago knew something? The question is, how *he* is to know it. There is one way; and nobody has ever hit upon more than one—by *discovery*.

There is a language very generally current in the world, which implies that knowledge can be *vicarious*; that when a truth has become known to *any one*, all who follow have nothing to do but passively to receive it; as if one man, by reading or listening could transport another man's knowledge ready manufactured into his own skull. As well might he try the experiment upon another man's eyesight. Those who have no eyesight of their own, or who are so placed that they cannot conveniently use it, must believe upon trust; they cannot *know*. A man who knows may tell me what he knows, as far as words go, and I may learn to parrot it after him; but if I would *know* it, I must place my mind in the same state in which he has placed his; I must make the thought my own thought; I must verify the fact by my own observation, or by interrogating my own consciousness.

The exceptions and qualification with which this doctrine must be taken, and which are more apparent than real, will readily present themselves. For example, it will suggest itself at once that the truth of which I am now speaking is *general* truth. To know an *individual* fact may be no exercise of mind at all; merely an exercise of the senses. The sole exercise of mind may have been in bringing the fact sufficiently close for the senses to judge it; and *that* merit may be peculiar to the first discoverer: there may be talent in finding where the thief is hid, but none at all in being able to see him when found. The same observation applies in a less degree to some *general* truths. To know a general truth is, indeed, always an operation of the *mind*: but some physical truths may be brought to the test of sensation by an experiment so simple, and the conclusiveness of which is so immediately apparent, that the trifling degree of mental power implied in drawing the proper inference from it is altogether eclipsed by the ingenuity which contrived the experiment, and the sagacious forecast of an undiscovered truth which set that ingenuity to work: qualities, the place of which may now be supplied by mere imitation.

So, again, in a case of mere *reasoning* from assumed premises, as, for instance, in mathematics, the process bears so strong an

analogy to a merely mechanical operation, that the first discoverer alone has any real difficulty to contend against; the second may follow the first with very little besides patience and continued attention. But these seeming exceptions do not trench in the least upon the principle which I have ventured to lay down. If the first discovery alone requires genius, it is because the first discovery alone requires any but the simplest and most commonplace exercise of thought. Though genius be no peculiar mental power, but only mental power possessed in a peculiar degree, what implies no mental power at all, requires to be sure no genius.

But can this be said of the conviction which comes by the comparison and appreciation of numerous and scattered proofs? Can it, above all, be said of the knowledge of supersensual things, of man's mental and moral nature, where the appeal is to internal consciousness and self-observation, or to the experience of our common life interpreted by means of the key which self-knowledge alone can supply? The most important phenomena of human nature cannot even be conceived, except by a mind which has actively studied itself. Believed they may be, but as a blind man believes the existence and properties of colour. To *know* these truths is always to discover them. Every one, I suppose, of adult years, who has any capacity of knowledge, can remember the impression which he experienced when he *discovered* some truths which he thought he had known for years before. He had only believed them; they were not the fruits of his own consciousness, or of his own observation; he had taken them upon trust, or he had taken upon trust the premises from which they were inferred. If he had happened to forget them, they had been lost altogether; whereas the truths which we *know* we can discover again and again *ad libitum*.

It is with truths of this order as with the ascent of a mountain. Every person who climbs Mont Blanc exerts the same identical muscles as the first man who reached the summit; all that the first climber can do is to encourage the others and lend them a helping hand. What he has partly saved them the necessity of, is *courage*; it requires less hardihood to attempt to do what somebody has done before. It is an advantage also to have some one to point out the way and stop us when we are going wrong. Though one man cannot *teach* another, one man may *suggest* to another. I may be indebted to my predecessor for setting my own faculties to work; for hinting to me what questions to ask

myself, and in what order; but it is not given to one man to *answer* those questions for another. Each person's own reason must work upon the materials afforded by that same person's own experience. Knowledge comes only from within; all that comes from without is but *questioning*, or else it is mere *authority*.

Now, the capacity of extracting the knowledge of general truth from our own consciousness, whether it be by simple *observation*, by that kind of self-observation which is called *imagination*, or by a more complicated process of analysis and induction, is originality; and where truth is the result, whoever says Originality says Genius. The man of the greatest philosophic genius does no more than this, evinces no higher faculty; whoever thinks at all, thinks to that extent, originally. Whoever knows anything of his own knowledge, not immediately obvious to the senses, manifests more or less of the same faculty which made a Newton or a Locke. Whosoever does this same thing systematically—whosoever, to the extent of his opportunity, gets at his convictions by his own faculties, and not by reliance on any other person whatever—that man, in proportion as his conclusions have truth in them, is an *original thinker*, and is, as much as anybody ever was, a *man of genius*; nor matters it though he should never chance to find out anything which somebody had not found out before him. There may be no hidden truths left for him to find, or he may accidentally miss them; but if he have courage and opportunity he *can* find hidden truths; for he has found all those which he knows, many of which were as hidden to *him* as those which are still unknown.

If the genius which *discovers* is no peculiar faculty, neither is the genius which *creates*. It was genius which produced the Prometheus Vincit, the Oration on the Crown, the Minerva, or the Transfiguration; and is it not genius which *comprehends* them? Without genius, a work of genius may be *felt*, but it cannot possibly be understood.

The property which distinguishes every work of genius in poetry and art from incoherency and vain caprice is, that it is *one*, harmonious, and a *whole*. that its parts are connected together as standing in a common relation to some leading and central idea or purpose. This idea or purpose it is not possible to extract from the work by any mechanical rules. To transport ourselves from the point of view of a spectator or reader, to that of the poet or artist himself, and from that central point to look round

and see how the details of the work all conspire to the same end, all contribute to body forth the same general conception, is an exercise of the same powers of imagination, abstraction, and discrimination (though in an inferior degree) which would have enabled ourselves to produce the selfsame work. Do we not accordingly see that as much genius is often displayed in explaining the design and bringing out the hidden significance of a work of art, as in creating it? I have sometimes thought that *conceptive* genius is, in certain cases, even a higher faculty than *creative*. From the data afforded by a person's conversation and life, to frame a connected outline of the inward structure of that person's mind, so as to know and feel what the man is, and how life and the world paint themselves to his conceptions, still more to decipher in that same manner the mind of an age or a nation, and gain from history or travelling a vivid conception of the mind of a Greek or Roman, a Spanish peasant, an American, or a Hindu, is an effort of genius, superior, I must needs believe, to any which was ever shown in the creation of a fictitious character, inasmuch as the imagination is limited by a particular set of conditions, instead of ranging at pleasure within the bounds of human nature.

If there be truth in the principle which the foregoing remarks are intended to illustrate, there is ground for considerable objection to the course of argument which you have adopted in the article which gave occasion to the present letter. You argue, throughout, on the obstacles which oppose the growth and manifestation of genius, as if the future discoverer had to travel to the extreme verge of the ground already rescued from the dominion of doubt and mystery, before he can find any scope for the faculty thereafter to be developed in him—as if he had first to learn all that has already been known, and then to commence an entirely new series of intellectual operations in order to enlarge the field of human knowledge. Now I conceive, on the contrary, that the career of the discoverer is only the career of the learner, carried on into untrodden ground; and that he has only to continue to do exactly what he ought to have been doing from the first, what he *has* been doing if he be really qualified to be a discoverer. You might, therefore, have spared yourself the inquiry, whether new truths, in as great abundance as ever, are within reach, and whether the approach to them is longer and more difficult than heretofore. According to my view, genius stands not in need of access to new truths, but is always where

knowledge is, being itself nothing but a mind with a capacity to know. There will be as much room and as much necessity for genius when mankind shall have found out everything attainable by their faculties, as there is now; it will still remain to distinguish the man who knows from the man who takes upon trust—the man who can feel and understand truth, from the man who merely assents to it, the active from the merely passive mind. Nor needs genius be a rare gift bestowed on few. By the aid of suitable culture all might possess it, although in unequal degrees.

The question, then, of “the comparative influence of ancient and modern times on the development of genius,” is a simpler, yet a larger and more commanding question, than you seem to have supposed. It is no other than this: have the moderns, or the ancients, made most use of the faculty of thought, and which of the two have cultivated it the most highly? Did the ancients *think* and find out for themselves what they ought to believe and to do, taking nothing for granted?—and do the moderns, in comparison, merely *remember* and *imitate*, believing either nothing, or what is told them, and doing either nothing, or what is set down for them?

To this great question I am hardly able to determine whether you have said aye or no. You are pleading for the moderns against those who place the ancients above them, for civilisation and refinement against the charge of being impediments to genius; yet you seem incidentally to admit that inferiority in the higher endowments, which it appeared to be your object to disprove. Your only salve for the admission is, that, if the fact be so, it must be our own fault. Assuredly it is always our own fault. It is just as possible to be a great man now as it ever was, would but any one try. But that does not explain why we do not try, and why others, mere men like ourselves, *did*; any more than we can explain why the Turks are not as good sailors as the English, by saying that it is all their own fault.

I cannot say that I think you have much advanced the question by terminating where you do. If you were writing to Pagans, it might have been to the purpose to tell them that they would find in Christianity a corrective to their faults and ills; or if we had been superior to the ancients instead of inferior, as in numerous other respects we really are, Christianity might have been assigned as the cause. But to refer us to Christianity as the fountain of intellectual vigour, in explanation of our having

fallen off in intellectual vigour since we embraced Christianity, will scarcely be satisfactory. In proportion as our religion gives us an advantage over our predecessors, must an inferiority to them be the more manifest if we have fallen below them after all. If genius, as well as other blessings, be among the natural fruits of Christianity, there must be some reason why Christianity has been our faith for 1500 years, without our having yet begun to reap this benefit. The important question to have resolved would have been, What is the obstacle? The solution of this difficulty I have sought in vain from your two articles—permit me now to seek it from yourself.

I complain of what you have omitted, rather than of what you have said. I have found in your general observations much that is *true*, much that is wise, and eternally profitable to myself and to all men. The fact which you announce, of the intimate connexion of intellectual with moral greatness, of all soundness and comprehensiveness of intellect with the sublime impartiality resulting from an ever-present and overruling attachment to duty and to truth, is deeply momentous; and, though many have known it heretofore, you also speak as one who knows it—who therefore has discovered it in himself. It is as true now as it was of yore, that “the righteousness of the righteous man guideth his steps.” But Christianity, since it first visited the earth, has made many righteous men according to their lights, many in whom the spiritual part prevailed as far as is given to man over the animal and worldly, yet we have not proportionally abounded in men of genius.

There must, then, be some defect in our mental training which has prevented us from turning either Christianity or our other opportunities to the account we might. Christianity, and much else, cannot have been so taught or so learnt as to make us thinking beings. Is it not that these things have *only* been taught and learnt, but have *not* been *known*?—that the truths which we have inherited still remain traditional, and no one among us, except here and there a man of genius, has made them truly his own?

The ancients, in this particular, were very differently circumstanced. When the range of human experience was still narrow—when, as yet, few facts had been observed and recorded, and there was nothing or but little to learn by rote, those who had curiosity to gratify, or who desired to acquaint themselves with nature and life, were fain to look into things, and not pay themselves with

opinions; to see the objects themselves, and not their mere images reflected from the minds of those who had formerly seen them. Education *then* consisted not in giving what is called knowledge, that is, grinding down other men's ideas to a convenient size, and administering them in the form of *cram*—it was a series of exercises to form the thinking faculty itself, that the mind, being active and vigorous, might go forth and know.

Such was the education of Greece and Rome, especially Greece. Her philosophers were not formed, nor did they form their scholars, by placing a suit of ready-made truths before them, and helping them to put it on. They helped the disciple to form to himself an intellect fitted to seek truth for itself and to find it. No Greek or Roman schoolboy learnt anything by rote, unless it were verses of Homer or songs in honour of the gods. Modern superciliousness and superficiality have treated the disputations of the sophists as they have those of the schoolmen, with unbounded contempt: the contempt would be better bestowed on the tuition of Eton or Westminster. Those disputations were a kind of mental gymnastics, eminently conducive to acuteness in detecting fallacies; consistency and circumspection in tracing a principle to its consequences; and a faculty of penetrating and searching analysis. They became ridiculous only when, like all other successful systems, they were imitated by persons incapable of entering into their spirit, and degenerated into foppery and *charlatanerie*. With powers thus formed, and no possibility of parroting where there was scarcely anything to parrot, what a man knew was his own, got at by using his own senses or his own reason; and every new acquisition strengthened the powers, by the exercise of which it had been gained.

Nor must we forget to notice the fact to which you have yourself alluded, that the life of a Greek was a perpetual conflict of adverse intellects, struggling with each other, or struggling with difficulty and necessity. Every man had to play his part upon a stage where *cram* was of no use—nothing but genuine *power* would serve his turn. The studies of the closet were combined with, and were intended as a preparation for the pursuits of active life. There was not *litterature des salons*, no dilettantism in ancient Greece: wisdom was not something to be prattled about, but something to be done. It was this which, during the bright days of Greece, prevented theory from degenerating into vain and idle refinements, and produced that rare combination which

distinguishes the great minds of that glorious people—of profound speculation, and business-like matter-of-fact common sense. It was not the least of the effects of this union of theory and practice that in the good times of Greece there is no vestige of anything like sentimentality. Bred to action, and passing their lives in the midst of it, all the speculations of the Greeks were for the sake of action, all their conceptions of excellence had a direct reference to it.

This was the education to form great statesmen, great orators, great warriors, great poets, great architects, great sculptors, great philosophers; because, once for all, it formed *men*, and not mere knowledge-boxes; and the men, being men, had minds, and could apply them to the work, whatever it might be, which circumstances had given them to perform. But this lasted not long: demolishing the comparatively weak attempts of their predecessors, two vast intellects arose, the one the greatest observer of his own or any age, the other the greatest dialectician, and both almost unrivalled in their powers of metaphysical analysis—Aristotle and Plato. No sooner, by the exertions of these gigantic minds, and of others their disciples or rivals, was a considerable body of truth, or at least of opinion, got together—no sooner did it become *possible* by mere memory to seem to know something, and to be able for some purposes even to use that knowledge, as men use the rules of arithmetic who have not the slightest notion of the grounds of them, than men found out how much easier it is to remember than to think, and abandoned the pursuit of intellectual power itself for the attempt, without possessing it, to appropriate its results. Even the reverence which mankind had for these great men became a hinderance to following their example. Nature was studied not in nature, but in Plato or Aristotle, in Zeno or Epicurus. Discussion became the mere rehearsal of a lesson got by rote. The attempt to think for oneself fell into disuse; and, by ceasing to exercise the power, mankind ceased to possess it.

It was in this spirit that, on the rise of Christianity, the doctrines and precepts of Scripture began to be studied. For this there was somewhat greater excuse, as, where the authority was that of the Omniscient, the confirmation of fallible reason might appear less necessary. Yet the effect was fatal. The interpretation of the Gospel was handed over to grammarians and language-grinders. The words of him whose speech was in figures and



parables were iron-bound and petrified into inanimate and inflexible *formulae*. Jesus was likened to a logician, framing a rule to meet all cases, and provide against all possible evasions, instead of a poet, orator, and *vates*, whose object was to purify and spiritualize the mind, so that, under the guidance of its purity, its own lights might suffice to find the law of which he only supplied the spirit, and suggested the general scope. Hence, out of the least dogmatical of books, have been generated so many dogmatical religions—each claiming to be found in the book, and none in the mind of man; they are above thought, and thought is to have nothing to do with them; until religion, instead of a spirit pervading the mind, becomes a crust encircling it, nowise penetrating the obdurate mass within, but only keeping out such rays of precious light or genial heat as might haply have come from elsewhere.

And after all which has been done to break down these vitiating, soul-debasing prejudices, against which every great mind of the last two centuries has protested, where are we now? Are not the very first general propositions that are presented for a child's acceptance, theological dogmas, presented not as truths believed by others, and which the child will hereafter be encouraged to know for itself, but as doctrines which it is to believe before it can attach any meaning to them, or be chargeable with the greatest guilt? At school, what is the child taught except to repeat by rote, or at most to apply technical rules, which are lodged, not in his reason, but in his memory? When he leaves school, does not everything which a young person sees and hears conspire to tell him, that it is not expected he shall think, but only that he shall profess no opinion on any subject different from that professed by other people? Is there anything a man can do, short of swindling or forgery (*à fortiori* a woman), which will so surely gain him the reputation of a dangerous, or, at least, an unaccountable person, as daring, without either rank or reputation as a warrant for the eccentricity, to make a practice of forming his opinions for himself?

Modern education is all *cram*—Latin cram, mathematical cram, literary cram, political cram, theological cram, moral cram. The world already knows everything, and has only to tell it to its children, who, on their part, have only to hear, and lay it to rote (not to *heart*). Any purpose, any idea of training the mind itself, has gone out of the world. Nor can I yet perceive many

symptoms of amendment. Those who dislike what is taught, mostly—if I may trust my own experience—dislike it not for being *cram*, but for being other people's *cram*, and not theirs. Were they the teachers, they would teach different doctrines, but they would teach them *as* doctrines, not as subjects for impartial inquiry. Those studies which only train the faculties, and produce no fruits obvious to the sense, are fallen into neglect. The most valuable kind of mental gymnastics, logic and metaphysics, have been more neglected and undervalued for the last thirty years than at any time since the revival of letters. Even the ancient languages, which, when rationally taught, are, from their regular and complicated structure, to a certain extent a lesson of logical classification and analysis, and which give access to a literature more rich than any other in all that forms a vigorous intellect and a manly character, are insensibly falling into disrepute as a branch of liberal education. Instead of them, we are getting the ready current coin of modern languages, and physical science taught empirically, by committing to memory its results. Whatever assists in feeding the body, we can see the use of; not so if it serves the body only by forming the mind.

Is it any wonder that, thus educated, we should decline in genius? That the ten centuries of England or France cannot produce as many illustrious names as the hundred and fifty years of little Greece? The wonder is that we should have produced so many as we have, amidst such adverse circumstances. We have had some true philosophers, and a few genuine poets; two or three great intellects have revolutionised physical science; but in almost every branch of literature and art we are deplorably behind the earlier ages of the world. In art, we hardly attempt anything except spoiled copies of antiquity and the Middle Ages. We are content to copy them, because that requires less trouble and less cultivated faculties than to comprehend them. If we had genius to enter into the *spirit* of ancient art, the same genius would enable us to clothe that spirit in ever-new forms.

Where, then, is the remedy? It is in the knowledge and clear comprehension of the evil. It is in the distinct recognition that the end of education is not to *teach*, but to fit the mind for learning from its own consciousness and observation; that we have occasion for this power under ever-varying circumstances, for which no routine or rule of thumb can possibly make provision. As the memory is trained by remembering, so is the reasoning

power by reasoning; the imaginative by imagining; the analytic by analysing; the inventive by finding out. Let the education of the mind consist in calling out and exercising these faculties; never trouble yourself about giving knowledge—train the *mind*—keep it supplied with materials, and knowledge will come of itself. Let all *cram* be ruthlessly discarded. Let each person be made to feel that in other things he may believe upon trust—if he find a trustworthy authority—but that in the line of his peculiar duty, and in the line of the duties common to all men, it is his business to *know*. Let the feelings of society cease to stigmatise independent thinking, and divide its censure between a lazy dereliction of the duty and privilege of thought, and the overweening self-conceit of a half-thinker who rushes to his conclusions without taking the trouble to understand the thoughts of other men. Were all this done, there would be no complaint of any want of genius in modern times. But when will that hour come? Though it come not at all, yet is it not less your duty and mine to strive for it—and first to do what is certainly and absolutely in our power, to realise it in our own persons.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

ANTIQUUS.

# NOTES ON SOME OF THE MORE POPULAR DIALOGUES OF PLATO

## I

### THE *PROTAGORAS*

CONSIDERING the almost boundless reputation of the writings of Plato, not only among scholars, but (upon their authority) among nearly all who have any tincture of letters, it is a remarkable fact that, of the great writers of antiquity, there is scarcely one who, in this country at least, is not merely so little understood, but so little read. Our two great "seats of learning," of which no real lover of learning can ever speak but in terms of indignant disgust, bestow attention upon the various branches of classical acquirement in exactly the reverse order to that which would be observed by persons who valued the ancient authors for what is valuable in them: namely, upon the mere niceties of the language first; next, upon a few of the poets; next (but at a great distance), some of the historians; next (but at a still greater interval), the orators; last of all, and just above nothing, the philosophers. An English bookseller, by the aid of a German scholar, recently produced an excellent edition of Plato; the want of sale for which, by the way, is said to have been one of the causes of his insolvency. But, with the exception of the two dialogues edited by Dr. Routh, we are aware of nothing to facilitate the study of the most gifted of Greek writers which has ever emanated from either of the impostor-universities of England; and, of the young men who have obtained university honours during the last ten years, we are much misinformed if there be six who had even looked into his writings. If such be the neglect of the best parts of classical learning among those whose special vocation and whose positive duty it is to cultivate them, what can be expected from others? Among those who are engaged in the incessant struggle which, in this country, constitutes more and more the business of active life—every man's time and thoughts being wholly absorbed in the endeavour to rise, or in the endeavour not to fall, in running after riches, or in running away from bankruptcy—the tranquil pursuit not only of classical, but of any literature deserving the name, is almost at an end. The con-

sequence is, that there are probably in this kingdom, not so many as a hundred persons who ever have read Plato, and not so many as twenty who ever do.

Among those, again, who, in the present or in former ages, have been more or less acquainted with the productions of the master-mind of antiquity, extremely conflicting and extremely vague notions have been entertained concerning the nature of his opinions, and the scope or purpose of his works. It is, in truth, extremely difficult to ascertain what were, and were not, Plato's own opinions. We have all heard of Platonists, and the Platonic philosophy; but though, out of detached passages of his writings, philosophic systems have been subsequently manufactured, it is to this day a problem whether Plato had a philosophy: if he had, it certainly was not the philosophy of those who have called themselves Platonists. This uncertainty arises from a variety of causes. In the first place, the author never speaks in his own person, but affects to be the mere narrator of conversations stated to have taken place between other and known individuals. When, too, the dialogue is of a controversial kind, as is almost always the case, the interlocutor to whom the victory is invariably assigned, not only is not the author himself, but is not even a man of straw, who might be supposed to be the author's representative; but a philosopher of the highest merit and reputation, who had decided and known opinions of his own—the author's master, Socrates. It can only be conjectured, with more or less probability, whether any part of these conversations actually took place as alleged; and if not, how far they were invented as mere specimens of argumentation and enquiry—how far to illustrate the opinions of Socrates—and how far to inculcate those of Plato himself. The difficulties of arriving at any certain solution are further complicated by the preference which is shown in most of the dialogues for overthrowing the various doctrines already in vogue, rather than for setting up any others in their room; and the frequent use of that “irony” for which Socrates was celebrated, and which superadds to the doubt whether the entire discourse has any serious purpose, a still further question how much of the particular passage is intended to be taken seriously.

If we might be permitted to mention the hypothesis respecting Plato's own opinions and purposes which appears to ourselves the most probable, it is one which has been suggested to us by a little essay of the celebrated Schleiermacher, *On the Character*

of *Socrates as a Philosopher*; a translation of which, with the addition of some valuable remarks, has recently been put forth by one of the few genuine scholars of whom our country can still boast, the Rev. Connop Thirlwall, in his periodical work, *The Philological Museum*, published at Cambridge. Dr. Schleiermacher's view of the nature of the service rendered to philosophy by Socrates is that it consisted, not in the truths which he actually arrived at, but in the improved views which he originated respecting the mode in which truth should be sought: and this appears to us to be, with some modifications, applicable likewise to Plato. No doubt the disciple pushed his mere inquiries and speculations over a more extended surface, and to a much greater depth below the surface, than there is any reason to believe that his master did. But though he continually starts most original and valuable ideas, it is seldom that these, when they relate to the results of philosophic inquiry, are stated with an air of conviction, or as if they amounted to fixed opinions. But when the topic under consideration is the proper mode of philosophising—either the moral spirit in which truth should be sought, or the intellectual processes and methods by which it is to be attained; or when the subject matter is not any particular scientific principle, but knowledge in the abstract, the differences between knowledge and ignorance, and between knowledge and mere opinion; then the views inculcated are definite and consistent, are always the same, and are put forward with the appearance of earnest and matured belief. Even in treating of other subjects, and even when the opinions advanced have least the semblance of being seriously entertained, the discourse itself has generally a very strong tendency to illustrate the conception which does seem to be really entertained of the nature of some part or other of the process of philosophising. The inference we would draw is that, on the science of the Investigation of Science, the theory of the pursuit of truth, Plato had not only satisfied himself that his predecessors were in error, and how, but had also adopted definite views of his own; while on all or most other subjects, he contented himself with confuting the absurdities of others, pointing out the proper course for inquiry, and the spirit in which it should be conducted, and throwing out a variety of ideas of his own, of the value of which he was not quite certain, and which he left to the appreciation of any subsequent inquirer competent to sit in judgment upon them. With respect to many of his

most interesting speculations, that inquirer is yet to come; so far have the penetration and sagacity of the man of genius outstripped the slow and halting march of positive science.

Of a writer of this character it is, of course, impossible to convey any notion by an enumeration of his tenets or a compendium of his philosophy, since he has nothing which can be called, with any assurance, tenets or a philosophy. Some conception, however distant and imperfect, of what the author is, may, perhaps, be derived from a very full abstract of some of the more interesting of his dialogues. It is in this hope that the following notes, made originally for the writer's personal satisfaction in the course of his private studies, shown, after the lapse of years, to one or two friends who were unacquainted with the writings of Plato, and unexpectedly found to be interesting to them, are now laid before a wider circle of readers. In the execution they have no pretension to any other merit than that of fidelity. Of the dramatic excellencies of the dialogues (which the finest specimens of the higher comedy have hardly equalled, and certainly not surpassed) little could be preserved in these sketches compatibly with any degree of abridgement. But the more important and interesting of the argumentative portions of each dialogue are very little curtailed, and in other respects approach as near to literal translations as the writer, consistently with producing such English as could be expected to be understood, knew how to make them.

The dialogue with which it is proposed to commence is the *Protagoras*; supposed to be one of the earlier productions of the author. There is no work of Plato which more obviously appears to have been intended rather as an exercise in the art of investigating truth than to inculcate any particular set of philosophical opinions. Many ingenious and some profound thoughts are, indeed, thrown out in the course of the discussion. But even if we had to form our judgment of this dialogue without the light thrown upon it by the other works of Plato, we should be compelled to draw one of two conclusions: either that the author had not yet made up his opinions on the topics treated in the dialogue, or that he did not think this a proper place for unfolding them. Protagoras, who along with Socrates is the chief interlocutor in the dialogue, was one of the people called Sophists, and seems to have been the first who avowedly took the title. Many of Plato's writings are directly aimed against the Sophists; and those writings have been the chief cause why, in

modern times, a designation which originally meant "a teacher of wisdom" has become significative of quibbling and deceit. Certain Church of England writers, in the *Quarterly Review* and other publications, have, for the base purpose of discrediting free institutions and freedom of inquiry, on the one hand exaggerated grossly the mischievous tendency of what the Sophists taught; and on the other, represented them as enjoying great favour and importance in the free States of Greece, and particularly at Athens; just as the same writers have represented the persons called Sycophants (that is, people who stirred up vexatious prosecutions in the Athenian courts of justice) as special favourites with the "sovereign multitude," in the face of the overwhelming evidence which the whole mass of Athenian literature affords, that these persons were as odious to the people as the lowest class of pettifogging attorneys, or even common informers, in our own country. With regard to the Sophists, this very dialogue of Plato affords (as will be seen) strong evidence that when he began to write, they were already in very ill repute; while all that is really known of them tends to throw great doubt upon their having, as a class, really deserved that degree of obloquy. All inquirers into abstract truth, except mathematicians—all who were afterwards called Philosophers (a term of which Socrates is believed to have been the inventor) had, before his time, been confounded together under that older name: and such are seldom popular with the mass of mankind; witness the House of Commons, and most public assemblies in this country. Among the Sophists were comprised all the earlier inquirers into physical nature, along with all the earliest moralists and metaphysicians; and though there were among the latter, as was inevitable in the infancy of science, as there are in Plato himself, much fallacy and verbal quibbling, there by no means appears to have been a greater proportion of doctrines having a pernicious tendency than has existed in all ages.

It does not seem to be the object of the present dialogue to expose the errors or false pretensions of the Sophists in general, or of Protagoras in particular; for although Protagoras is confuted, and made to contradict himself again and again, after the usual manner of Plato, and is occasionally made somewhat ridiculous, for being only able to harangue, and not to discuss (the complaint which Plato never ceases to urge against the Sophists), yet, when he is suffered to state his sentiments at



length, what he utters is by no means either absurd or immoral, but, on the contrary, sound and useful sense, forcibly expressed, or, at the lowest, an able pleading in favour of the side he espouses, on whatever question the discussion happens for the moment to turn upon; and this, too, although the opinions of Protagoras on the nature, sources, and limits of human knowledge, are, in other places, the subject of Plato's warm, but not disrespectful, attacks.\*<sup>1</sup> If it be possible, therefore, to assign any specific and decided purpose to this dialogue, it would appear to be intended not to hold up the Sophists either to ridicule or obloquy, but to show that it was possible to go much beyond the point which they had attained in moral and political philosophy; that, on the whole, they left the science of mind and of virtue in an extremely unsatisfactory state, that they could not stand the test of the rigorous dialectics which Socrates carried into these inquiries; and that the truth could only be ascertained by that more accurate mode of sifting opinions which the dialectic method (or that of close discussion between two persons, one of whom interrogates, and the other answers) furnishes, but which speech-making and the mere delivery of doctrines from master to student (the practice of the Sophists) absolutely preclude.

A brief abstract of the dialogue will, I think, confirm this notion of its scope and object, by showing that Socrates merely plays with opinions throughout.

\* The metaphysical doctrines of Protagoras seem to have been, in their fundamental points, not very remote from those of David Hume. Diogenes Laertius enumerates his principal tenets thus: "That man is the measure of all truth (or, in other words, that all things are only what they appear to the percipient mind), and that the mind itself is nothing but a series of sensations." (ἔλεγε τε μηδὲν εἶναι ψυχῆαν παρὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις.) One of his works commenced thus: "Concerning the gods, I am unable to know whether they exist or do not exist, for there are many hindrances to such knowledge—the obscurity of the subject, and the shortness of human life." (ἔσι, μὲν δὲ αὖν οὐκ ἔγω εἰδέναι, εἰθ' ὥς εἰσιν, εἰθ' ὥς οὐκ ἐσὶν πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα εἰδέναι, ἧ τε ἀδηλόγητος, καὶ βραχύς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.) For these sceptical doctrines the biographer adds that Protagoras was, at an advanced age, banished from Athens, and his writings collected from all who possessed them and burnt in the public market-place; an instance, among many others, that prosecutions for blasphemy are not of modern invention.

The same biographer mentions that Protagoras, until his abilities excited the notice of his countryman Democritus (both were citizens of Abdera), had followed the humble calling of a porter; in which station he signalled himself by being the first inventor of a *knot*—if we may be permitted thus to translate the word *τύλη*.

<sup>1</sup> Asterisks in the subsequent text designate footnotes as contained in the original.

A young man, named Hippocrates, having heard, late in the evening, that Protagoras has come to Athens, hurries to Socrates in the morning, before it is light, and presses him to go with him to Protagoras, expressing the most earnest desire to become the scholar of so wise a man, and obtain a participation in his wisdom. Socrates consents; but as it is too early to visit Protagoras at that hour in the morning, they pass the intermediate time in conversation. Socrates then, in order, as he says, to try the strength of Hippocrates, begins to question him as follows: "If you were desirous of receiving the instructions of your namesake Hippocrates of Cos, and were asked in what capacity, and in order to become what, you would answer, In the capacity of a physician, and in order that you might become a physician. If you offered money to Polycleitus or Pheidias, that they might take you under their tuition, and were asked the same question, you would answer, In the capacity of statuaries, and in order that you might become a statuary. Now if anyone should ask you in what capacity you are seeking the instructions of Protagoras, what would be your answer?"—"In the capacity of a Sophist."—"And what do you expect to become through his instructions?"—Hippocrates blushed, and answered, "If this be like the two preceding cases, I must expect to become a Sophist." "Should you not, then, be ashamed," said Socrates, "to hold yourself forth as a Sophist to the Greeks?"—He confessed that he should. (This is one of the passages from which it may be clearly inferred that the profession of a Sophist was a disreputable one in Greece before Plato wrote.)

Socrates, however, supplied Hippocrates with a defence, by telling him that he supposed he did not intend going to Protagoras as he would go to a physician or an artist, to learn his profession, but as he would go to a writing-master, a gymnast, or a music-master, not in order to become himself a music-master, &c. &c., but to learn so much of these arts as belonged to a liberal education. Hippocrates assenting, Socrates continued: "Do you know what you are about to do? You are about to give your soul to be trained into the hands of this man, whom you call a Sophist; but what a Sophist is, I should be much surprised if you knew; and yet, if you do not, you must be ignorant whether you are doing a wise act or a foolish one. What do you suppose a Sophist

is?"—"As the word implies, a man who knows wisdom."—"You might say as much of a painter or an architect—he knows wisdom; but if we were asked what wisdom, we should answer, the wisdom which relates to the taking of likenesses, and so forth. What is the wisdom which the Sophist knows? What can he teach you to do?"—"He can teach me to speak well." "This may be a true answer, but not a sufficient one. On what subject can he teach you to speak well? for a musician can teach you to speak well on the subject which he knows, viz. music. What can a Sophist teach you to speak well upon? Upon that which he knows?"—"Certainly." "And what is it which he knows?"—Hippocrates confessed that he could not tell. "See, then, to what a danger you expose yourself. If you meditated putting your body into the hands of any one, at the risk of its well-being, you would consider for a long time before you made your resolution, and would take counsel with your friends and relations; but what you value much more than your body—your spiritual nature \*—on the good or bad condition of which your well or ill-doing entirely depends, you are going to put under the care of a man whom you only know to be a Sophist, not knowing, as it appears, what a Sophist is, and this without taking even an hour's time for consideration, or asking the advice of anybody. Is not a Sophist a dealer in those wares which the mind subsists upon?"—"And what does the mind subsist upon?"—"Upon instruction. Let us not, then, suffer the Sophist to impose upon us by praising the quality of his wares. Other dealers praise their wares, although they are no judges what is good for the sustenance of the body, nor their customers either, unless such as happen to be physicians or gymnasts. So these men, who hawk their instructions from city to city, praise all they sell, and yet some of these may very likely be quite ignorant whether what they offer is good or bad for the mind, and the purchasers equally so, unless some of them happen to understand the medicine of the mind. If, therefore, you are a judge of good and bad instruction, you may safely buy instruction of Protagoras or any other person; but if not, take care that you do not endanger what is dearest to you. You risk much more in buying instruction than food. Food you may take home in another vessel, and have it examined by qualified persons before you take it into your stomach; but

\* *ψυχῇ*, *mind*, not in the sense of intellect, but in the largest sense—all which is not *body*.

instruction is taken at once into the mind, and the benefit is reaped, or the injury incurred, on the spot."

After this conversation they proceed together to the house where Protagoras is living, and find him there with two other Sophists—Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis—who are several times introduced as personages in the drama, though not called to participate in the discussion. It may be gathered from what is said of these persons, and by them, in the course of the work, that Hippias taught physics more particularly than morals or politics, and that the science of Prodicus consisted chiefly in drawing frivolous and hair-breadth distinctions between the significations of terms which were commonly considered synonymous. This propensity of Prodicus is displayed in different parts of the dialogue in a very amusing manner, and several touches on his part might be quoted as admirable specimens of the higher comedy.

Socrates opens to Protagoras the object of their visit, by telling him that Hippocrates, a young man of high rank and excellent capacity, desired to become conspicuous in his country, and thought that this would be more easily attainable through the instructions of Protagoras. The Sophist having asked whether Hippocrates would wish to speak with him alone, or before the numerous company there assembled, and Socrates having left it to his option, Protagoras commended Socrates for his discretion, saying that a stranger who travels about and draws round him the most promising young men of every State, making them leave their other pursuits and associates, and attach themselves to him for the sake of their own improvement, has need of caution, since such a proceeding must necessarily excite jealousy and ill-will; and, for this reason, all the ancient Sophists—for the profession, he contended, was ancient—had disguised their real pursuit for fear of consequences, and had professed poetry, the science of divine worship, and even music or gymnastics, as a cover. But he himself did not follow their example, thinking that they never effected their purpose: the disguise did not conceal their real object from the leading men in the various cities, for whose eyes alone this veil was intended, since the common people merely repeat what they say; and an unsuccessful attempt at concealment only made the matter worse, by causing hypocrisy to be added to their other imputed offences. Protagoras, therefore, openly avowed himself a Sophist, and thought this a much safer plan than to deny it; and by this and various pre-

cautions he had so managed, that, although he had practised the profession for many years, no harm had ever come to him in consequence of it.\* He, therefore, preferred that his conversation with Socrates and Hippocrates should take place before the whole company.

"Suspecting," says Socrates (who is the supposed narrator of the whole), "that he wished to make himself glorious in the eyes of Prodicus and Hippias, from our seeking his society, I proposed inviting them, and those who were conversing with them, to join in our conversation." Accordingly they all assembled, and Protagoras told Socrates that he might now state his business.

Socrates accordingly repeated what he had already said, that Hippocrates wished to receive the instructions of Protagoras, and was anxious to know of what nature was the benefit which he would derive from them. Protagoras answered that he would every day improve, and return home better than he was the previous day. "So," said Socrates, "he would, if he were to attend on the painter Zeuxippus—he would return home improved in painting, and a better painter; or if he were to attend Orthagoras, the flute-player, he would every day return home a better flute-player than the day before. In what respect, if he attends on you, will he every day return home improved?" Protagoras commended the question and answered: "He will not be treated by me in the same manner as by other Sophists, who spoil young men by putting them back into geometry and astronomy, and the other arts, the very things which they had previously fled from. I teach them what they come to learn—viz., how they may best manage their own families, and how best to speak and act in the affairs of the state."—"You teach politics then, and profess to make men good citizens."—"I do so."—"You possess an admirable art, if you do indeed possess it, which I know not how to disbelieve. But hitherto I had imagined that what you profess to teach is not capable of being taught, or delivered from men to men. For the Athenians, who are a wise people, if in their assembly they are deliberating on ship-building, send for the ship-builders to advise them, and will hear nobody else; if about building a house, they will listen to nobody but architects; and if any one else, however noble or

\* Another of the passages which overthrow article upon article of the *Quarterly Review*.

rich, attempt to speak, they scoff and drive him away. But when the discussion is upon anything which concerns the general management of the state, they listen to persons of all ranks and professions without distinction, and never think of reproaching any man for presuming to advise on the subject when he has never studied it, or learned it of a master. It is evident, therefore, that they do not think it capable of being taught; and the best and wisest citizen, as Pericles for example, though he teaches his sons excellently whatever a master can teach, cannot succeed in teaching them the wisdom and virtue in which he himself excels; in this they are no better than ordinary individuals. For these reasons," says Socrates, "I have hitherto doubted that virtue can be taught; but if Protagoras can prove the possibility, I beseech him to do so."

Protagoras consents, and asks whether he shall teach by a *μῦθος* (which I am inclined to translate a *legend*), like an old man instructing the young,\* or by a discourse (*λόγος*). They give him his choice, and he prefers to tell them a story. If, as this circumstance would indicate, it was a frequent mode with the Sophists to deliver their doctrines in this way, it would account for the *μῦθοι* which are scattered through the writings of Plato, and which, appearing to be related half in jest, half in earnest, it is not very easy otherwise to explain.

The story is, that when the gods made men and animals, they gave it in charge to Prometheus and Epimetheus to endow them; that Epimetheus solicited the task from his brother, and having obtained it, proceeded to distribute the endowments of strength, swiftness, &c., among the various animals, on the principle of compensation; but when he had exhausted all the endowments which he had to give, he found that man was left unprovided for. Prometheus, to remedy this blunder, stole τῇν εἰς τεχνίον σοφίαν (scientific wisdom) from heaven, and with it fire, without which it was of no use, and bestowed these upon man. On this account was it that man, being akin to the gods, alone of all animals acknowledged their existence; and, by means of art, acquired the faculty of speech, made to himself clothes and houses, and procured food. But as there were no towns, and no human society, for want of the art of Polity, the human race were in danger of being extirpated by wild beasts; when Jupiter, in compassion, sent Mercury from heaven to make a present to

\* ὥς πρεσβύτερος νεωτέροις

mankind of Shame and Justice, in order that there might be mutual bonds among men, and that society might be possible. Mercury asked whether he should confer these gifts upon all mankind, or whether, like Medicine and the other arts, they should be given to a few only, for the benefit of all. Jupiter ordered him to give them to all; for if a few only possessed them, political society would be impossible; and bade him establish a law, as from Jupiter, that he who was incapable of shame and justice should, as a disease in the state, be extirpated.

“For this reason,” continued Protagoras, “the Athenians and others, who on architecture or any other manual art will hear only the few who possess it, are ready, when the subject is social virtue, which depends wholly upon justice and prudence, to listen to all advisers; because of this virtue all should be partakers, or states cannot exist.

“And to prove that in reality all men do believe that justice and the other social virtues ought to belong to all, observe this: If a man pretends to be a good musician, and is not so, all men ridicule him, and his friends admonish him as a man out of his senses. But when justice and the social virtues are the matter in question, although they well know that a man is unjust, yet if he tells the truth and publicly avows it, what in the other case they considered to be good sense is here thought madness; they maintain that all men should profess to be just, whether they are so or not, and that he who does not profess it is a madman, because the man who does not, in some degree, partake of the quality of justice, is unfit to live amongst mankind.

“It seems, then, that mankind in general think all persons qualified to advise concerning these virtues, since all are required to possess them. But further, they think that these virtues are not natural and spontaneous, but the result of study and of teaching. For those evils which are supposed to come upon men by nature or ill fortune, no man ever thinks of reproaching another for: who ever reprimanded, much less punished, another for being of low stature, weak, or deformed? such evils are regarded as an object only of pity. Men admonish, and censure, and punish one another, for the absence of those good qualities only, which they deem to be acquired by study and art; and for this reason only it is that they so deal with the unjust. Let us but consider what punishment does, and we shall see that, in the opinion of mankind, virtue may be acquired. No man punishes

another because he has done wrong; this would be the blind vengeance of the irrational animals. Rational punishment is not on account of the past act, which, having been done, cannot be undone; it is for the sake of the future; it is in order that this offender, and those who witness his punishment, may be warned against offending hereafter. The Athenians, therefore, and others, since they do punish the unjust man, do so with this intent; they do so because they think that virtue may be acquired, and that punishment is a means whereby men are induced to acquire it.

“To the other argument of Socrates, that good men, although they teach to their children other things, fail of teaching them to be good, the following is the answer: If it be true that there is something which, unless every member of the State possesses, the state cannot exist; and if this something be not architecture or pottery, or any mechanical art, but justice, prudence, holiness—in short, manly virtue; if all men, and women too, and children, whatever else they have, must have this, or be punished until they acquire it, or, if incapable of acquiring it, must be sent out of the country or put to death; and if, nevertheless, good men, teaching their children other things, do not teach them this, they are unworthy the name of good men. For that it *can* be taught we have clearly shown. Is it credible, then, that men should teach their sons those things, to be ignorant of which carries with it no evil consequences, and *not* attempt to teach them that which, if they do not learn, death, banishment, confiscation, destruction of their fortunes and prospects, will fall upon them? Not so. From infancy upwards they instruct their children in these things; they tell them what is just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable, holy and unholy; they bid them practise the one and avoid the other; and, if they disregard the admonition, correct them by threats and blows. And, in placing them with teachers, they enjoin care of the child's morals still more earnestly than of his learning; and the teachers make them read and commit to memory those passages of poets and other authors, by preference, which commend virtue and reprove vice. Music also is taught them, chiefly, to soften the mind and accustom it to harmony, and order, and proportion; and they are delivered to the gymnast in order that their bodies, being in good order, may be fitter to obey the commands of a well-ordered mind. When they leave school, the state requires them to learn its laws



and regulate their lives by them, as those who learn to write follow the copy which is set to them by the writing-master; and if they deviate from this rule they are punished; and the very name given to punishment indicates its object—it is termed *correction*.\*

“Nor is it wonderful, notwithstanding this, that good fathers should have sons of no particular merit. If there were any other branch of knowledge the cultivation of which by every citizen were necessary to the being of the state; if society could not exist unless all could play on the flute, and if all were taught to play, and reproached if they played ill, instead of being envied for playing well—(as at present men are not envied for being just and virtuous, since it is every man’s interest that others should be just and virtuous, for which reason we are all eager to teach justice and virtue to all men)—do you suppose that the sons of good flute-players would be better players than other men? Not so. Whoever had the best natural disposition for music would be the best player: a good player’s son would often play ill—the son of a bad player, well; but all would be competent players, compared with those who knew nothing of music whatever. In like manner all civilised men, even the most unjust, if compared with men among whom there is no training, no tribunals, no laws, with the wild men of whom poets tell us, would appear a perfect master in virtue: and after mixing with such men, you would be delighted to meet with the greatest villains of our own country. But now you are fastidious, and because all are teachers of virtue, you will not allow that any are so: just as if you were to inquire in this city who teaches Greek, you would find nobody; or if you sought somebody competent to teach the son of a mechanic his father’s art, which he had learned in his father’s shop as well as his father could teach it, you might find nobody; but of men who could teach those who were totally ignorant of the art, you would find abundance. It is thus with virtue: all men teach it, and we may think ourselves fortunate if we find one who is a little more capable than others of advancing men towards it. Such a man I profess to be; and I am willing that my scholars should judge of my pretensions. Accordingly, the terms of my contract with them are, that when they have received my instructions, they shall either pay me the amount of my demand, or, if they think

\* ως ἐκθροσύνης τῆς δίκης, ἐκθῆναι

this too much, shall pay me according to their own estimate, made in a temple and upon oath, of the value of the instructions "

Protagoras here ceased speaking, and Socrates, after making many acknowledgments and professing himself almost convinced, said that one little difficulty still remained in his mind, which no doubt Protagoras could easily remove. For if a man were to apply to Pericles, or any other of the famous orators, he might hear from them as fine a speech as that which Protagoras had made; but if he were to put a question to them, they could no more answer, or ask again, than an inanimate book; but, like brass, which if struck makes a long reverberation unless we lay our hands upon it and stop it, they make answer to a short question by an inordinately long harangue. "Protagoras, however, is able not only to make a long speech, but to give a short answer to a short question: I therefore wish to have one difficulty explained. You say that virtue can be taught; and you have several times put together justice, prudence, temperance, and holiness, and called them collectively by the one word virtue. Is virtue, then, one thing, and are all these parts of it, or are they all names for one and the same thing?" Protagoras answers: "Virtue is one, and all these are parts of it." "Are they such parts as the parts of gold, all of them exactly resembling the whole, and one another? or (like the parts of the face, viz. eyes, nose, ears, and mouth) extremely unlike?"—"They are like the parts of the face." "May the same man have one of these parts of virtue, and be destitute of the others?"—"Yes: many are courageous, but unjust, and many are just but unwise." "Then wisdom and courage are also parts of virtue?"—"Yes." "And unlike each other, as you said of the other parts?"—"Yes."

"Let us consider further of this matter. Is justice a just thing or an unjust one? surely it is a just thing."—"Undoubtedly." "Is holiness a holy or an unholy thing?—most assuredly a holy one?"—"Yes." "But you say that the different parts of virtue are unlike one another. Then since justice is a just thing, and holiness is not like justice, is holiness an unjust thing? Since holiness is a holy thing, and justice is not like holiness, is justice an unholy thing? I should affirm the contrary; that justice and holiness are either the same, or very nearly alike, and that nothing is so holy as justice, nor so just as holiness."—"It does not appear to me," replied Protagoras, "so simple and obvious that justice and holiness are the same thing. There seems to me to

be a difference; but let us call them the same thing, if you will.” “I have no use,” said Socrates, “for ‘if you will.’ I do not desire to examine or confute an ‘if you will,’ or an ‘if you think so,’ but what you think, and what I think, leaving out the ‘if.’” — “No doubt,” said Protagoras, “justice and holiness are somewhat alike: all things, even black and white, hard and soft, and all other contraries, are alike in some respects. The parts of the face, which were the comparison we used, are somewhat alike. You might prove, in this way, all things to be alike. We must not call things like or unlike merely because they have some little points of resemblance or of difference.” “Do you then consider holiness and justice to have only some little points of resemblance?” — “Not exactly so, but yet not as you seem to think.” “Since this discussion seems to displease you, let us consider another part of what you said.”

Socrates, accordingly, dropping the subject of justice and holiness, but still endeavouring to drive Protagoras to an acknowledgment of the identity of all the virtues, now chooses as his example *σωφροσύνη*. This word, which was in very popular use, and which conveyed to the mind of a Greek associations of the highest praise, is untranslatable into English, because we have no single word by which we are accustomed to express the same combination of qualities and of feelings. Names of what Locke calls mixed modes, and especially the names of moral attributes, have very rarely any exact synonyms in another language. There are few things by which so much light would be thrown upon the ideas and feelings of a people as by collecting from a large induction, and clearing up by an accurate analysis, the niceties of meaning of this important portion of their popular language. We should thus learn what moral and intellectual qualities the people in question were accustomed to think of in conjunction, and as forming part of one and the same character; and what, both in kind and in the degree of strength, were the habitual sentiments which particular moral or intellectual qualities excited in their minds. How great would be the difficulty of making an ancient Greek understand accurately what the nations of modern Europe mean by *honour*; a Frenchman, what the English mean by the *feelings of a gentleman*; any foreigner, what we mean by *respectability*. It is equally difficult for an Englishman to enter into the conception of *σωφροσύνη*, and throw himself into the feelings which that word excited in a Greek mind.

Sometimes it seems as if it ought to be translated *prudence*, sometimes *temperance*, sometimes *decency* or *decorousness*, sometimes, more vaguely, *considerateness*, sometimes *good sense*. The French word *sagesse* has nearly the same ambiguities, and expresses nearly the same mixture of moral and intellectual qualities.\* The connecting tie among these various attributes seems to be this: The word *σωφροσύνη* denoted, in the mind of a Greek, all the qualities or habits which were considered most contrary to *licentiousness* of morals and manners, in the largest sense of the term. In a state of society in which the control of law was as yet extremely weak, in which the restraints of opinion, even in the democratic states, acted with little force upon any but those who were ambitious of public honours, and in which everywhere (even at Athens, where person and property were far more effectually protected than in the other states of Greece) the unbridled excesses of all sorts committed by the youth of the higher classes, endangered the personal security and comfort of every man, it is not wonderful that self-restraint, and the habits of a thoughtful, regulated life, should be held in peculiarly high esteem.

The great difficulty to an English reader, of following an argumentative discussion which turns chiefly upon the meaning of a word having no synonym in English will scarcely in this instance be rewarded by the intrinsic merit of the discussion itself. Socrates forces Protagoras successively to admit, that *σωφροσύνη* is the same thing with wisdom, that it is the same thing with justice, or at least inseparable from it, and is pressing him still further, when Protagoras flies off into a long speech, filled with illustrations from the material universe, on a topic very distantly connected with the subject which they were discussing. At the conclusion of this oration he was loudly applauded.

Socrates hereupon observed that he had a short memory, and if a man made a long speech to him, he always forgot what it was about. As, therefore, if he were deaf, Protagoras would think it necessary to speak to him in a louder than his ordinary voice; so, as he was forgetful, he hoped that Protagoras would shorten his answers, and accommodate their length to his capacity. Protagoras demurred to this, and lost his temper; and there are

\* The interesting dialogue of Plato, called the *Charmides*, of which the quality of *σωφροσύνη* is expressly the subject, affords ample illustration of all the varieties and shades of association connected with that word.

several pages of excellent comic dialogue, at the end of which the matter is accommodated by the intervention of the bystanders; and it is agreed, at the instance of Socrates, that Protagoras should interrogate and Socrates answer, in order that Socrates might afford a specimen of what he thought the proper mode of answering. It turned out an unhappy specimen, however, for Socrates was led by it to make as long a speech as any in the dialogue.

Protagoras, who appeared anxious to change the subject, said that he thought criticism on poetry to be one of the most important parts of instruction, and he would interrogate him concerning poetry, keeping, however, on the subject which they were discussing, that of virtue. Simonides, in one of his poems, says: "It is difficult to become a good man." In the same poem he afterwards expresses his dissent from a saying of Pittacus, *χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι* (it is difficult to be a good man). Is not this inconsistent with what he had himself affirmed in the previous passage?

Socrates pretends at first to be puzzled by this question, and calls in Prodicus, with his nice distinctions, to help him in finding a difference between *γενέσθαι* (to become) and *εἶναι* (to be), and in finding a double meaning for the word *χαλεπὸν*. After playing with the subject for some time he gives his own account of the matter thus:

"The scope and object," says he, "of the poem of Simonides, is obviously to overthrow the dictum of Pittacus, 'It is difficult to be a good man.' The wisdom of the ancients," continues he, "was couched in these little pithy sentences, like those of the Lacedaemonians in our own day, of whose institutions and mode of education the sages of old were great admirers. This sentence of Pittacus, among others, was much quoted and praised, and Simonides thought that if he could demolish it, he would obtain the same sort of reputation which is obtained by defeating a celebrated athlete."

Socrates then adduces some philological proofs that the sense of Simonides was as follows: It is difficult to be *becoming* a good man—to be in progress towards it; but it is not, as Pittacus says, merely difficult to *be* a good man—it is impossible; the gods alone are capable of actually realising the conception of goodness. He adduces subsequent passages of the poem in support of this interpretation. They are to this effect: "Every man upon

whom an irretrievable misfortune falls, becomes bad. I will not seek for that impossible thing, an entirely blameless man. I praise and love those (willingly) who do not commit any thing evil." "Here," says Socrates, "he cannot mean, according to the ordinary collocation, I praise and love those who do not willingly commit any thing evil. Simonides was too wise to suppose that any man willingly commits evil: he knew that they who commit evil commit it involuntarily. He meant, I praise and love willingly those only who do not commit any thing evil: meaning that a good man sometimes forces himself to praise and love those whom he does not love willingly; as, for instance, an ill-doing parent, or his country when ill-doing; and the poet accordingly adds: 'I am satisfied when I find a man not wicked, nor entirely inactive, and well versed in civil justice. I will not blame him: there are enough of fools to blame.'"

Socrates, having made this commentary upon the poem of Simonides, invites Protagoras to resume the former discussion, saying that to converse on poems seems to him like the resource of men of vulgar minds, who, at their social meetings, being unable, from ignorance, to converse with their own voices, call in singing women and musical instruments, and use *their* voices in the room of conversation. But men such as most of us profess to be, do not need the voices of others, nor poets whom we cannot interrogate about their meaning, and may dispute about it for ever. Let us rather discuss with each other, and make trial of our own powers, and of the possibility of our attaining truth. Having softened Protagoras by some compliments, and by disclaiming any design in conversing with him, except that of facilitating the attainment of truth, by seeking for it in conjunction with the wisest man whom he knows, he at length prevails upon Protagoras to make answer to his interrogations; and again asking Protagoras whether he adheres to his opinion, that wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and holiness, are different things, he receives this answer: That four of the five are very closely allied, but that courage is altogether different from the others, since there are many men who are extremely unwise, intemperate, unjust, and unholy, but highly courageous

"By the courageous," said Socrates, "you mean the daring?"—"Yes; those who will encounter what others are afraid to face." "Virtue is a beautiful thing, is it not?"—"The most beautiful of all things." "Is all virtue beautiful, or only some

virtue?"—"All, and in the highest degree." "Who are they who dive daringly?"—"Divers." "Is it because they understand diving?"—"It is." "Who fight on horseback daringly? good riders or bad?"—"Good riders. In short," said Protagoras, "those who know most are the most daring." "Are you acquainted with persons who, although they know nothing of all these matters, are yet extremely daring?"—"But too much so." "Are these to be deemed courageous?"—"Courage would not be a beautiful thing if they were, since they are out of their senses." "Then if those who dare without knowledge are not courageous, but are out of their senses, while the wise are not only daring but courageous; are not wisdom and courage by this account the same thing?"

"You have not," said Protagoras, "correctly remembered what I said. I affirmed that the courageous were daring, but not that the daring were courageous: had you asked this, I should have answered: Not all of them; and you have not shown me to have been wrong in affirming that the courageous were daring. You conclude that wisdom is the same thing with courage, because those who know are more daring than those who know not: but in this manner you might prove bodily strength to be the same thing with courage; for the strong in body, it cannot be denied, are powerful; and those who know how to wrestle, being undoubtedly more powerful than those who do not, you might infer that they were more muscular. But I do not admit that the powerful are strong in body; only, that the strong in body are powerful. Power is not the same thing with bodily strength; power may proceed from knowledge, from passion, or from insanity; but bodily strength, from nature, and good acquired habits of body. In like manner, I say that daring is not the same thing with courage. Daring may proceed from scientific skill, from passion, or from insanity; courage, from nature, and good acquired habits of mind."

Here commences the last, and most interesting and most philosophical, of the discussions in this dialogue: On the true nature of courage; and, incidentally, on the proper test of virtue and of vice.

"Do not some men," asks Socrates, "live well, and others ill?"—"Without doubt." "Does a man live well if he lives in pain and vexation?"—"No." "But if he passes his life pleasantly to its very termination, he lives well?"—"He does so."

“To live pleasantly then is good; to live unpleasantly is evil?”—  
 “If he lives pleasantly by honest pleasures.” “You call then  
 some pleasant things evil, and some painful things good, like the  
 generality of mankind?”—“I do.” “But are not all pleasant  
 things good, in so far as they are pleasant, and all painful things  
 bad, in so far as painful?”—“I am not sure,” answered Pro-  
 tagoras, “whether it can be universally maintained, that all  
 pleasant things are good, and all painful things evil. I think  
 that I should answer in a manner more safe for the present dis-  
 cussion, and more conformable to the tenour of my life, if I were  
 to say that some pleasant things are not good, some painful  
 things not evil, and some are neither good nor evil.” “Are  
 not pleasant things those which cause, or which partake of,  
 pleasure?”—“Undoubtedly.” “And is not pleasure a good?”—  
 “Let us inquire, and determine whether the good and the pleasant  
 are identical.” “Unfold, then, to me another part of your mind,  
 and as we have seen how you are minded on the subject of the  
 good and the pleasant, let us see whether your opinion on the  
 subject of Knowledge is the same with that of the common of  
 mankind. Knowledge, according to the vulgar opinion, is not  
 a controlling and governing principle. Whatever may be a man’s  
 knowledge, it is not that, they think, which governs him, but  
 sometimes he is governed by anger, sometimes by pleasure, some-  
 times by pain, or love, or fear; and knowledge is dragged about  
 by all these, and used by them as their slave. Is this your opinion;  
 or do you, on the contrary, think that knowledge is a grand and  
 ruling principle, which, wherever it exists, governs; and that he  
 who knows what is good and evil is overmastered by nothing,  
 but does that which his knowledge commands?”—“I think as  
 you now say; and it would be disgraceful to me, if to any one,  
 to maintain that wisdom and knowledge were not the most  
 commanding of all human possessions.” “You speak nobly  
 and truly. But the common herd do not agree in your opinion;  
 they say that many who know what is best, and have the power  
 to practise it, do not; and if you ask why, the answer is, Being  
 overpowered by pleasure, or by pain, or so forth.” “Men say  
 this, as they say many other foolish things.”—“Let us then  
 instruct them what that state is, which they style, being overcome  
 by pleasure.”

“When you say, my good friends, that a man is overpowered  
 by pleasure, you mean that, being overpowered by delicious



meats and drinks and other delightful objects of sense, knowing that these things are bad, he yet partakes of them?"—"Certainly." "Let us then ask them, In what view do you say that these things are bad? Is it because they are pleasant, and afford immediate delight; or because they afterwards occasion diseases and poverty? If they only conferred enjoyment, and produced none of these remote effects, would they be bad merely by causing enjoyment? They would surely answer, that these things are not bad for the immediate pleasure they afford, but for the diseases and want which flow from them in the end."—"They would." "But diseases and want are painful things?"—"They are." "It seems then that these things are bad only because they produce pains, and deprive us of other pleasures?"—"It appears so." "And when, again, you say that there are good things which are painful, you mean such things as bodily exercises and the toils of military service, the painful operations of surgery, and the like?"—"Certainly." "And are these good, on account of the acute suffering with which they are immediately attended, or on account of the health and good habits of body, and the public safety, empire, and wealth, which are their ultimate consequence?"—"On account of the last." "They are good, therefore, because they terminate in pleasure, and in the prevention of other pains; and there is nothing on account of which things can be called good, except pleasure and pain."—"Admitted." "Then pleasure is the same thing with good, and pain with evil; and if a pleasure is bad, it is because it prevents a greater pleasure, or causes a pain which exceeds the pleasure. if a pain is good, it is because it prevents a greater pain, or leads to a greater pleasure. For, if this were not so, you could point out some other end, with reference to which, things are good or evil: but you cannot."—"Granted."

"But if all this be true (still addressing the vulgar), how absurd, we may tell them, was the opinion you expressed, that a man often, although knowing evil to be evil, practises it nevertheless, being overpowered by pleasure? How ridiculous this is, will be plainly seen if we drop some of the terms which we have hitherto used, and since the pleasant and the good are but one thing, call them by one name; as likewise, the painful and the bad. You say, that knowing evil to be evil, a man yet practises it, being overpowered; by what? They cannot now say, by pleasure; since we have now another name for it, viz. good. Being over-

powered by good! It is strange, and absurd, if a man practises evil, knowing it to be evil, being overpowered by good. If we ask whether the good is worthy or not worthy to overpower the evil, they must answer, Not worthy; for, otherwise, to be so overpowered would be no fault. How, then, we must answer, can good be unworthy to overpower evil, or evil to overpower good, but by reason of its smaller amount? It is clear, then, that what you call, to be overpowered by pleasure, is to choose a greater evil for the sake of a less good. If we now drop the words good and evil, and resume the words pain and pleasure, we find, in like manner, that he who is said to be overpowered by pleasure, is overpowered by a pleasure which is unworthy to overpower: and a pleasure is unworthy to overpower a pain, only by being less in amount. For, if it be said, The immediately pleasant differs greatly from the ultimately so, I answer, only in the degree of pleasure and pain. If we sum up the pleasure and the pain, and place them in opposite scales, we ought to choose the greater pleasure, or the less pain, whether they are immediate or remote.

“Now, is it not true that magnitudes appear smaller at a distance, greater when close at hand? that sounds appear louder when nearer, fainter when more distant, and the like?”—“Undoubtedly.” “If, then, our well-doing depended upon our possessing great magnitudes, and avoiding small ones, what would our safety depend upon? Upon the faculty of seeing things merely as they appear, which leads to perpetual errors in the estimation of magnitudes; or upon the art of measurement, which teaches us to detect false appearances, and ascertain the real magnitudes of bodies?—“Upon the latter.” “If our safety in life depended upon always choosing the larger number, and eschewing the less, what would be our safeguard? surely knowledge: one of the kinds of knowledge of measurement, since it relates to excess and defect; and (since it relates to numbers), the knowledge of arithmetic?”—“Undoubtedly.”

“Since, then, it is upon the proper choice of pleasures and pains that our well doing in life depends, viz. upon choosing always the greater pleasure, or the smaller pain, what we here stand in need of is likewise measurement since this also relates to excess and defect. But if it be measurement, it is art, and knowledge. What particular art and knowledge it is, we shall hereafter inquire; but that it is knowledge, we have clearly

shown, in opposition to that opinion of the vulgar which we set out with combating" Protagoras, and all others who were present, assented, and it was agreed that doing evil always arose from ignorance, and doing well from knowledge.

"Since, then, no one chooses evil, knowing it to be evil, but mistakingly supposing it to be good, no one, who is compelled to choose between two evils, will knowingly choose the greatest."—"Allowed." "But what is fear? Is it not the expectation of some evil?"—"It is." "Let Protagoras then defend himself, and show that he did not err, when he said that courage differed greatly from the other virtues. Did he not say, that the courageous were they who will encounter what others are afraid to face?"—"Yes." "Who will encounter not merely what the coward will encounter?"—"Certainly not." "The coward will encounter only what is safe; the courageous man what is formidable?"—"So men say." "They do: but do *you* say, that the courageous man will encounter what is formidable, knowing it to be formidable?"—"Your previous argument has shown this to be untenable." "It has: for if we have reasoned correctly, no man encounters that which is formidable, knowing it to be so: for to be overpowered, and lose command of himself, we have shown to be a mere case of ignorance."—"We have." "But all, whether brave or cowardly, are ready to encounter what they consider safe."—"Very true: but the brave man and the coward differ even to contrariety in what they encounter. The brave man will encounter war, the coward will not." "War being a noble or an ignoble thing?"—"A noble thing." "And, if noble, good?"—"Certainly." "And, if noble and good, then, by our admission, pleasant?"—"Granted." "Are cowards, then, unwilling to do what they know to be the better and the more pleasant?"—"To admit this would be to contradict our former admissions." "But the courageous man; *he* too does what is better and more pleasant?"—"He does." "The courageous man, in short, is neither bold when he ought not, nor fearful when he ought not; cowards are both."—"Yes." "But if cowards are bold, and are fearful, when they ought not, is it not from ignorance?"—"It is." "Then men are cowards from not knowing what is formidable?"—"They are." "But what makes men cowards, must be cowardice?"—"Agreed." "Then cowardice is the ignorance of what is and is not formidable; courage, being the contrary of cowardice, consists merely

in the knowledge of what is, and what is not, formidable." Protagoras with much difficulty allowed that this consequence followed from what they had previously agreed upon.

Socrates finally remarked what a whimsical turn their discussion had taken. Protagoras and he had changed parts in the course of it. *He* had begun by denying that virtue could be taught, and yet had engaged himself in a long argument to prove that all virtue consisted in knowledge, and therefore *could* be taught; while Protagoras, who had begun by asserting that virtue is capable of being taught, had as strenuously laboured to show that it is not knowledge, and therefore not teachable. "Seeing all this," said Socrates, "I am entirely thrown into confusion, and would be most eager to engage in further discussion, and clear up the question of what virtue is, and whether it can be taught." Protagoras applauded his wish, and complimenting him on his powers of argument, said: "I consider myself not to be in other respects a bad man, and least of all an envious one. I have already said to many persons that I admire you above all whom I have met, especially above those of your own age; and I should not be surprised if you became one of those who are celebrated for their wisdom. We will pursue the discussion which you suggest another time; but now other business calls me away." And thus the conversation terminated.

It is the object of these papers notto explain or criticise Plato, but to allow him to speak for himself. It will not, therefore, be attempted to suggest to the reader any judgment concerning the truth or value of any of the opinions which are thrown out in the above dialogue. Some of them are so far from being Plato's own opinions that the tendency of his mind seems to be decidedly adverse to them. For instance, the principle of utility—the doctrine that all things are good or evil, by virtue solely of the pleasure or the pain which they produce—is as broadly stated, and as emphatically maintained against Protagoras by Socrates, in the dialogue, as it ever was by Epicurus or Bentham. And yet, the general tone of Plato's speculations seems rather to be favourable to the opinion that certain qualities of mind are good or evil in themselves, independently of all considerations of pleasure or pain. That such was the predominant tendency of his mind is, however, all that can be affirmed; it is doubtful whether he had adopted, on the subject of the original foundation of virtue, any fixed creed.

But we have already remarked, that when the subject-matter of the discussion is the nature and properties of knowledge in the abstract, the opinions of Plato seem never to vary, but to proceed from a mind completely made up. And of this the above dialogue is an exemplification. For, whatever are the particular arguments used as media of proof, there appears throughout the dialogue, as there does in the other works of Plato, a distinct aim towards this one point—the inseparableness, or rather absolute identity, of knowledge and virtue: an attempt to establish, that no evil is ever done (as he expresses it both in this dialogue and elsewhere) voluntarily; but always involuntarily, from want of knowledge, from ignorance of good and evil; that scientific instruction is the source of all that is most desirable for man; that whoever had knowledge to *see* what was good, would certainly *do* it; that morals are but a branch of intelligence. It may with some certainty be affirmed that this was Plato's deliberate and serious creed.

## II

### THE PHAEDRUS

THIS is the most miscellaneous of all the longer dialogues of Plato. The subjects on which it touches are very numerous, and are held together by a very slight thread of connexion. It is not a controversial dialogue, part of it being in long discourses, while even in the part which consists of conversations, Socrates does not combat the opinion of Phaedrus, but states his own. None of the works of Plato tends more strongly to confirm the opinion that the design of his speculations was rather to recommend a particular mode of inquiry than to inculcate particular conclusions. Whatever in this dialogue has reference to *methods of philosophising* (which is the case with a great and the most instructive portion of it) appears perfectly serious and in earnest, while in the remainder there is an appearance of sportiveness, and sometimes almost of mockery.

The dramatic merits of the *Phaedrus* are very great. It may be pronounced a model of lively and familiar conversation between two intimate acquaintances, Athenian gentlemen in the best sense of the term, accomplished up to the highest standard of their age.

The dialogue derives an additional interest, from its containing, in the form of an allegory, those doctrines, or rather ideas, on the subject of love which, by giving rise to the vulgar expression "Platonic love," have made the name of Plato familiar to the ear of thousands, who otherwise might probably never have heard of his existence.

Socrates meets his friend Phaedrus coming from a visit to Lysias, the celebrated orator, and going out to walk. He asks Phaedrus what was the subject of discourse between him and Lysias, and Phaedrus promises to give him an account of it if he will accompany him in his walk.

Socrates having complied, Phaedrus tells him that Lysias had read to the company a written discourse on the subject of love, *τειρωμένον τινα τῶν καλῶν, οὐχὺπὸ ἐραστοῦδέ*, i.e., a letter, or speech (whichever we choose to call it), containing a proposal of a nature which would commonly be called an amatory one, but without professing to be in love. "This last circum-

stance," continues Phaedrus, "is the cream of the matter; for he maintains that one who is not in love ought to be preferred, as to the matter in question, to one who is." "He is a fine fellow," said Socrates. "I wish he would maintain that a poor man should be preferred to a rich man, an old man to a young, and so on, going through all the qualities which I and most others possess: his discourse would then be of great public utility." He then presses Phaedrus very earnestly to relate the discourse. Phaedrus pretends want of memory, and coquets a little, whereupon Socrates rallies him and says that he knows he is dying to relate it, and sooner than lose the opportunity would end by compelling him to listen. Phaedrus was preparing accordingly to give an account of the discourse when Socrates asks him to let him see what he has got under his cloak, which turns out to be the very discourse itself. When the mirth and pleasantries excited by this discovery have subsided, they agree to read the manuscript together as soon as they can find a convenient place for sitting down.

As they are walking along the banks of the Ilissus in quest of such a spot, Phaedrus asks Socrates whether this is the place from which Boreas is said to have carried off Oreithya. "No," replied Socrates, "it is a little lower down." "Do you believe this story," asked Phaedrus, "to be true?"—"It would be nothing extraordinary," said Socrates, "if, like the wise men, I disbelieved it. I might then say, that the north wind blew this girl over the adjoining rocks while she was diverting herself in the meadows, and that for this reason she was said to have been carried off by Boreas. According to my notion, however, all these things are very entertaining, but they would make life exceedingly laborious and troublesome: for one would next have to explain the Centaurs, and then the Chimaera, and a whole crowd of Gorgons and Pegasus; which if one were to disbelieve, and attempt to bring back to probability, it would be the business of a life. I have not leisure for these things, and I will tell you the reason: I am not yet able, according to the Delphic injunction, to *know myself*; and it appears to me very ridiculous, while ignorant of myself, to inquire into what I am not concerned in. I therefore leave these things alone, and I believe with the vulgar; not searching into such matters, but into *myself*, and inquiring whether I am a beast, of a more complicated structure and more savage than Typhon, or a tamer and simpler animal, whose nature partakes of divinity."

Saying these things, they arrive at the spot which Phaedrus had selected for sitting down to read the manuscript. Socrates begins to look about him with wonder, and praises the beauty of the place. Phaedrus laughs at him and tells him that he is more like a stranger than a native, and never goes out of the town at all. Socrates begs to be pardoned for the omission; "for," says he, "I like to learn: the fields and trees cannot teach me anything, the men in the town can. But you have found a cure for this fault of mine: for, as they lead hungry cattle by carrying a branch of a tree before them, so, by holding a book in your hand, you might make me follow you all over Attica."

After these preliminaries Phaedrus reads the discourse; which is in the form of a love-letter, if that can be called a love-letter which disclaims love. The following is the substance, and almost an exact translation:—

"You know how it is with me, and that I think this affair would be advantageous to us: but I claim, not to be rejected because I do not love you. A lover, when his desire ceases, repents of all that he has done for you: the other has no cause for repentance, for the good he does you was not done from irresistible impulse, but from choice, and deliberation. A lover, too, reckons up the benefits he has conferred upon you, the trouble and anxiety he has undergone for your sake, the damage which he has suffered in his private affairs by reason of his love, and thinks that by all this he has long ago made a sufficient return to you for your favours; but he who does not love, can neither pretend to have neglected his own concerns on account of his love, nor to have undergone labour or anxiety, nor to have quarrelled with his relations, so that nothing is left but to be eager and assiduous in doing whatever will give you pleasure. Again, if it is a reason for valuing a lover, that he is more attached to the person whom he loves than to any person else, and is ready both by word and deed to incur the enmity of others, in order to gratify the object of his love, it clearly follows that, if he should afterwards love another, he will do as much for that other, and will be willing, for the gratification of the other, to quarrel with his first love. And how can it be reasonable to grant such a favour to one who is under a calamity, which they who know what it is will not even attempt to cure? for the men themselves confess that they are in an unsound state of mind, and know their own



folly, but cannot conquer it. How then can they, when they come to their senses, judge that to be well done which they determined upon when in such a state? Further, if you select from among your lovers even the very best, your choice must be made from a small number; but if you choose from among all persons whatever, *except* lovers, the one who is most suitable to yourself, there is a much greater chance of your finding a person deserving of your attachment.

“ If, moreover, you stand in awe of common opinion, and fear lest if it be known it should be a reproach to you; a lover, expecting to be thought as happy by others as he thinks himself, cannot restrain himself from boasting, and making a display to the world that he has not laboured in vain: but he who is not in love has command of himself, and can choose what is really best, in preference to the mere opinion of men. Many persons must unavoidably see and hear of the lovers who run after you, and if you are even seen talking with them, it is supposed that there either is, or shortly will be, an intrigue between you: but, from your associating with a person who is not in love, no such inference will be drawn, because people are aware that you must associate with somebody, either from friendship or for some other pleasure. Further, if you are alarmed by a consideration of the instability of all attachments, and by the reflection that under any circumstances a quarrel would be an equal misfortune to both, but after you have given away what you most value, it is a most severe calamity to you; then you have reason to be more especially fearful of lovers: for they are most easily offended, and consider the slightest thing an injury to them. For which reason they wish to divert the object of their attachment from all other society; fearing those who have wealth, lest they should outbid them in money; those who have instruction, lest they should outshine them in intellect; and, in short, fearing all who have any desirable possession or quality whatever. Wishing, therefore, to alienate you from all such persons, they leave you without friends; and if you endeavour to make friends, and so provide better for your own interest, you will provoke them. But those who are not in love, but have obtained their wishes on account of their good qualities, are not jealous of those who seek your society, but, on the contrary, dislike those who care not for it, thinking that you are scorned by the latter, but benefited by the former; so that you are more likely to make friends than enemies through their means.

“Lovers, moreover, frequently desire your person before they are acquainted with your manners and character, so that it is uncertain whether they will continue attached to you when their desires are at an end: but those who are not in love, but have obtained your favours in consequence of previous friendship, are not likely to be less your friends in consequence of the favours they have received, but rather to consider those favours as a pledge of future friendship. And, moreover, it is more for your mental improvement to comply with my wishes, than with those of a lover; for lovers praise all you say or do, however unreasonable, partly from fear of your displeasure, and partly because their own judgment is warped by their desire. For such is the effect of love: if unfortunate, it makes that a source of pain which gives no pain to other persons; if fortunate, it makes the lover applaud, in the person he loves, what is really no cause for satisfaction: so that lovers deserve our pity far more than our envy. But if you yield yourself to me, I shall not serve you for present pleasure, but for future good; not over-mastered by love, but retaining command over myself; not vehemently provoked by slight causes, but tardily excited to moderate resentment even by great provocations; pardoning all involuntary offence, and endeavouring to dissuade you from that which is voluntary: these are the signs of what will be a lasting friendship. But if you suppose that there cannot be a strong attachment, save from love, consider that if that were true, we should not love our children, nor our parents, nor possess faithful friends, who have become so from other causes than sexual desire. It may be said that you should confer favours upon those who need them most. But, if this were true, it would follow that you should select for the objects of your benefits, not the best, but the most destitute; and that in your entertainments you should invite, not your friends, but beggars and the hungry: for they will come the most eagerly, and will be most delighted and most grateful, and will invoke innumerable blessings upon your head.

“But the persons fittest to receive favours are not they who most need them, but they who can make the best return: not lovers only, but all who are worthy; not they who will merely enjoy you during the season of your beauty, but they who when you grow old will continue their benefits; not they who will ostentatiously display their successes to others, but they who will preserve a modest silence; not they who will pay court to you for

a short time, but they who will remain your friends during your whole life; not they who when their desires have ceased, will look out for an excuse to quarrel with you, but they whose excellence will then be most perceived, when their pleasures are over. Remember, then, all these things; and consider that lovers are continually remonstrated with by their friends, as giving in to an evil practice, but he who loves not, was never for that reason censured by any friend, as consulting ill for his own affairs. You may perhaps ask me, whether I advise you to gratify all who do not love you? But neither do I think that a lover would bid you comply with the desires of all your lovers, for it would diminish the value of the favour to him who receives it, and would increase the difficulty of concealment. Now, harm ought not to arise to either party from the connexion, but advantage to both."

Having read this discourse, Phaedrus asks Socrates whether he does not admire it exceedingly, both in other respects, and for the excellence of the language? Socrates replies: "Wonderfully so: for I was looking at you all the while, and you seemed so delighted that I, thinking you know more about these things than I do, was delighted along with you." Phaedrus begged that there might be a truce with jesting, and that Socrates would tell him seriously whether he thought there was any other man in Greece who could say so much, and all of it so excellent, on the same subject? "What!" said Socrates, "must we praise the discourse for the value of the thoughts, as well as for the language? For my part, I only attended to it as a specimen of composition, for I did not suppose that Lysias himself would imagine that he was equal to the proper treatment of the *subject*. And, moreover, he seemed to me to repeat the same thing two or three times over, as if he had not a very great deal to say: perhaps he did not mind this, but only desired to show that he could say the very same thing in several ways, and always excellently."

Phaedrus did not like this mode of treating the discourse, and persisted that nothing which was fit to be said had been left out, and that nobody could say anything more or better on the same subject after what Lysias had said. This Socrates declared he could not concede, or many old writers, both men and women, would rise up and bear witness against him. "Who?" asked Phaedrus. "I cannot say," rejoined Socrates, "but I must have read something in Sappho, or Anacreon, or some other

writer, for I find myself quite full of matter which I could repeat to you on the subject, nowise inferior to what you have just now read. Knowing my own ignorance, I am certain that I could not have thought of all this by myself, I must therefore have learnt it from somebody else, but from my silliness I have even forgotten from whom." Phaedrus insisted that he should prove his assertion by speaking as much on the same subject as was in the manuscript, and better in quality. "Do not suppose," said Socrates, "that I affirm Lysias to have missed the mark altogether, or pretend that it is possible to treat the subject omitting everything which he has said. How, do you suppose, would it be possible to argue that one who is not in love should be favoured in preference to a lover, abstaining altogether from praising reasonableness and sanity of mind, and from blaming the want of it? This, any one who treats the subject cannot avoid saying, and nothing could be said to the purpose without it. But this kind of things must be taken for granted, and of such we must not praise the invention, but the arrangement; while of those things which, instead of being impossible to miss, are difficult to find, we may praise the invention and the arrangement too." Phaedrus assents and says he will allow him to make use of that one principle of Lysias, that a lover is in a less sane state of mind than one who is not in love, but insists that he shall compose a discourse, all the rest of which shall be longer and better than the rest of the discourse of Lysias. Socrates now pretends to have been in jest, and after playfully refusing for some time, which gives rise to some very amusing conversation, he in a mock heroic manner invokes the Muses and begins to relate the following as a discourse actually held on an occasion of the kind supposed:—

"There is but one mode of beginning for those who would deliberate well; viz., to know what the thing, about which they are to deliberate, really is. The vulgar are not aware that they are ignorant of the essence of every thing: conceiving themselves, therefore, to know the inmost nature of the thing which they are about to discuss, they do not come to a mutual explanation respecting it at the commencement of their inquiry, but pass it over, and proceed to employ merely *probable* arguments. That we may not fall into the error which we condemn in others, let us—who have to inquire whether a lover, or one who is not a lover, should be preferably indulged—begin by ascertaining what love is, and what is its operation; that we may keep this in view,

when we subsequently examine whether it produces good or hurt.

“That love is a kind of desire, is clear to all; on the other hand, that persons who are not in love may have physical desire, we know. How then do we distinguish the lover from him who is not in love? We must consider that in each of us there are two principles \* which lead and govern us; the one, a natural desire for pleasure; the other, an acquired judgment, which seeks that which is best. These two principles sometimes are in harmony with each other, sometimes in opposition; and in the latter case sometimes one is the stronger, sometimes the other. Now, Judgment, which guides us, by means of reason, to the best, when it is the superior in strength, receives the name of Prudence: † Desire, which drags us irrationally to pleasure, when it governs us, is called Incontinence. ‡ Incontinence, again, has many names, for there are many species of it; and whichever of these predominates, gives its own name, and that an opprobrious one, to the person whom it rules. If the desire of the pleasures of the palate predominates over reason, and over the other desires, it is called gluttony, and the person who is affected by it is termed a glutton: if the desire of intoxication similarly preponderates, we know what name it receives. We now see what that desire is, respecting which we are inquiring. The desire which (being independent of reason, and being victorious over right judgment) tends towards the pleasure of beauty, is called love.”

Here Socrates interrupts himself, and jocularly pretends to be inspired by the deities of the spot. “What I am now speaking,” says he, “is not far removed from dithyrambics.

“We have now,” continues he, “settled what the thing is about which we are speaking; and keeping this in view, we can inquire what benefit or hurt arises respectively from a lover, and from one who is not a lover, to the person who complies with their desires. Now, he who is governed by desire, and the slave of pleasure, must of necessity attempt to make the object of his love a source of as much pleasure to him as possible. But, to a person who is in an unsound state, that is pleasant which opposes to him no resistance; that which is his equal or his superior, is

\* δύο τινέ εἶσιν ἰδέα.

† This seems to be here the most appropriate translation of the word *σωφροσύνη*. See the observations on this word in the Notes on the *Protagoras*.

‡ This word, if used in its widest sense, appears to correspond with what is here meant by *ὑβρις* (*protervitas*).

disagreeable to him. A lover, therefore, cannot endure that the object of his passion should be either superior or equal to him: he will strive all he can to make it inferior and feebler. Now, the ignorant are feebler than the wise; the cowardly, than the brave; he who is unable to speak, than an orator; a slow person, than a ready one. A lover, therefore, must of necessity rejoice that the object of his love should labour under these disadvantages, and must do all he can to superinduce them if they do not already exist, or else he will be deprived of what gives him immediate pleasure. He must of necessity be jealous; and the object of his love will suffer great evil from him, by being withheld from much useful intercourse; and above all, from that which produces the greatest wisdom—philosophy. From this, a lover must above all things withhold the person whom he loves, lest, in consequence of it, he himself should be despised; and must endeavour all he can to make that person be ignorant of every thing, and by depending for every thing upon the lover, be a source of the greatest amount of pleasure to him, and of evil to the beloved object itself.

“If a man who is in love, is so ill a superintendent and associate in the affairs of the mind, he is not less so in what concerns the body. He who prefers the pleasant to the good, will prefer a habit of body soft and relaxed, bred up, not in the clear sunshine, but in the shade, unused to labour and hardy exercise, accustomed only to delicate and effeminate living; such a state of body, in short, as in all great exigencies would give confidence to an enemy, fear and anxiety to a friend, and to the lover himself.

“Every one, but a lover especially, must see, that he would wish the person he loves to be destitute of all which is most dear, most affectionate, and most divine: to be deprived of father, mother, relations, and friends, lest they should censure and obstruct the intercourse with him; to be destitute of property, those who possess it being neither so easily obtained, nor, when obtained, so easily managed. to be unmarried, childless, and to remain for as long a period as possible undomesticated and without a home, in order to remain as long as possible subservient to his pleasures. Again; there are many other things which are in themselves bad; but in most of them there is an admixture of immediate pleasure: A flatterer is a most dangerous and mischievous animal, but nature has mixed up in him, a pleasure not entirely illiberal; a courtesan, and many other of the most

pernicious things, are in daily intercourse the most pleasant; but a lover is not only pernicious, but the most unpleasant of all things in daily intercourse. For it is an old saying that persons of the same age like one another; equality of age, producing similarity of tastes, causes friendship, by reason of resemblance: but even of *their* intimacy, there is such a thing as satiety; and moreover, in every thing, and to all persons, what they cannot get rid of, becomes a burthen. Now, both these are inconveniences which are suffered above all from a lover; who is likely to be much superior in age to the object of his love, and, hurried by an irresistible impulse, is so assiduous in running after and engrossing the person whom he loves, that he can in no way be got rid of.

“And not only is he thus disagreeable and detrimental while he loves, but unfaithful when he has ceased to love. He was only endured in the first instance, on account of his many promises and vows of future benefits. When, however, these are to be fulfilled, he is changed, and has recovered his reason. The person whom he loves, not knowing this, reminds him of his past words and deeds: he is ashamed to say that he has changed, and knows not how, when in his senses, to perform the promises which he made and swore to when in a state of temporary madness, lest, acting as he did before, he should again be what he then was. He therefore flies off from his promises, and from the society of the person whom he formerly loved; who has then the ungrateful task of pursuing, and resenting; having been unfortunately ignorant that the attachment of a lover is not a feeling of good will, but an appetite which seeks merely its own gratification, and that the love of a lover is like that of the wolf to the lamb.”

Here Socrates breaks off his discourse and Phaedrus tells him that as yet he has only done half what he had undertaken; he has only censured the lover, and not pointed out the good which arises from an intimacy with one who is not a lover; why therefore does he stop? Socrates jocularly answers, “Did you not perceive that I had already got beyond dithyrambics, and into heroics, and that too, when vituperating” (for which purpose the poets generally employed the dithyrambic measure). “What do you suppose would happen if I were to commence a panegyric? I should be in a state of absolute enthusiasm; completely inspired by the nymphs of the place, to whose influence you have premeditatedly exposed me. I will be satisfied with saying in one

word that by reversing all that we have said against the lover, you will find all the good qualities which distinguish the other."

Having discoursed to the above effect, Socrates pretended to be going away, lest Phaedrus, whom he rallies upon his extreme fondness for an argument, should compel him to make another discourse; but presently he affects to perceive what he calls the divine and customary sign, which, he says, is continually stopping him when he is about to undertake anything; and to hear a voice which will not allow him to depart until he has expiated an offence which he has committed against the divinity. "I am a prophet," he continues; "not a very good one, but (like a man who writes a bad hand-writing) good enough for my own use. The soul is in some sort a prophet; and mine pricked me while I was speaking, and made me even then afraid that I was offending the gods for the sake of honour among men; and I now perceive what my offence is. You have yourself brought, and have made me utter, two most horrible and impious discourses. Is not Love the son of Venus, and one of the gods?" "So it is said," replied Phaedrus. "Not by Lysias, however," rejoins Socrates, "nor by your speech, which you by your incantations contrived to utter through my lips. If Love is, as he is, a god, or something divine, he cannot be anything evil. Both our speeches, however, represented him as such. I therefore must purify myself; and, as Stesichorus, who had been struck blind like Homer for calumniating Helen, recovered his sight by making a recantation, I will make my *Palinodia*, more wisely, before I have yet suffered anything from the anger of the god whom I have maligned. Do you not think, indeed, that any person of a generous and civilised disposition, who either loves or has loved, if he were to hear us saying that lovers contract strong enmities from slight causes, and behave jealously and injuriously towards the object of their love, would suppose that we had been bred up at sea, and had never seen any liberal and generous attachment; and would be far indeed from admitting the justice of the censures which we have cast upon Love?" "Perhaps," said Phaedrus, "he would." "For this reason," said Socrates, "and for fear of the god himself, I will endeavour to efface my reproaches by a panegyric; and I would advise Lysias to make haste and do the same.

"It is a fallacy to maintain that one who loves not, should be favoured in preference to a lover, because the one is in his senses and the other not. If madness were always and of necessity an



evil, this would be very just; but it happens that the very greatest of blessings come to us through madness; madness given, it is true, by the divinity. The prophetesses at Delphi and Dodona, and elsewhere, have rendered to Greece, both individually and publicly, when frantic, the greatest services, but none that I know of when in their sober senses. There would be no end to the enumeration of those who have foretold future events correctly, prophesying by a frenzy inspired from heaven. Those ancients who invented our language, certainly thought madness no disgrace, or they would not have given to the noblest of arts, that of predicting the future, the name of *μανικη* (madness), which we have ignorantly corrupted into *μαντικη* (prophesy). In like manner, the inquiry into the future, when conducted by those who are in their senses, by observation of the flight of birds, and other signs, received from the ancients (to indicate that it operated by means of thought and intellect) the name *οἰωνιστικη*,\* which the moderns have corrupted into *οἰωνιστικη* (the science of omens). In so much, then, as the prophetic art excels that of augury and omens, in so much do the ancients testify that the madness which comes from God, excels the wisdom which comes from men. Many again, on whom, by the anger of the gods, great calamities and diseases have fallen, have been cured by the supervention of madness, which operating upon them in a manner similar to divination, indicated to them the proper prayers and adorations of the gods, by which they were purified, and became free from their previous evils. A third kind of madness is that, which, coming from the Muses, awakens the mind, and stirs it up to pour itself forth in odes and other kinds of poetry; and by adorning the deeds of the ancients, instructs their posterity. For he who, without madness inspired by the Muses, knocks at the door of poetry, thinking that he can become an adequate poet by mere art, fails of his purpose, and his poetry is thrown into the shade by that of the inspired madmen.

“Such, and yet more, are the good works which proceed from madness inspired by the gods. Let us not, therefore, be disturbed by any argument which inculcates the preference of a sane above an insane mind. Let us first require proof, that love is not sent by the gods, for the benefit both of the lover and of the person loved. We ourselves will show that, on the contrary, this kind of madness is given by the gods for the greatest possible felicity

\* From *οἰομαι* (to think) and *νοῦς* (intellect).

of mankind. The proof will be very unsatisfactory to merely clever people, but convincing to the really wise.\* We must, with this view, first institute an inquiry concerning the soul, both of men and of gods; what are its affections, and what its acts?

“All souls are immortal; for that which is always in motion must be immortal. (That which is set in motion by something else may cease to be moved, and may therefore cease to live. But that which is self-moving, as it never quits *itself*, never ceases moving, but is the source and beginning of motion to all other things which are moved. But that which is a beginning, is not itself generated: a thing which is generated may be traced up to a beginning, but that beginning would not be the beginning if it could be traced to anything prior. Not being generated, it is not susceptible of destruction; for, if the beginning were destroyed, every thing which is generated from it would be destroyed with it; if that which is self-moving were destroyed, since it is the cause of all other motion, there would be no motion whatever.) Since, therefore, that which is self-moving is immortal, immortality is the essence of life; for, all bodies which require to be moved from without, are termed lifeless; those which are moved from within are said to have life. Life, therefore, is the principle of self-motion, and is consequently ungenerated, and immortal. Life is immortal; or in other words, the soul is immortal.†

“Respecting the immortality of the soul, this is sufficient. About its form, we shall speak as follows. What it is, would be the matter of a long inquiry, and would require divine aid; but to show what it resembles, is in human power, and requires not so long an exposition. We may compare it to a chariot, with a pair of winged horses and a driver. In the souls of the gods, the horses and the driver are entirely good: in other souls, only partially so, one of the horses excellent, the other vicious. The business, therefore, of the driver, is extremely difficult and troublesome.

“Let us now attempt to show how some living beings came to be spoken of as mortal, and others as immortal. All souls are employed in taking care of the things which are inanimate; and travel about the whole of heaven, in various forms. Now, when the soul is perfect, and has wings, it is carried aloft, and helps to

\* *Ἡ δὲ δὴ ἀπόδειξις ἐστὶν δεινὸς μὲν ἀπιστος, σοφοῖς δὲ πιστή.*

† The same word, *ψυχή*, signifies life and the soul. This is no ambiguity. What is the soul but the principle of life? not organic life, which trees have as well as human beings, but sentient life, consciousness

administer the entire universe; but the soul which loses its wings, drops down until it catches hold of something solid, in which it takes up its residence; and having a dwelling of clay, which seems to be self-moving on account of the soul which is in it, the two together are called an animal, and mortal. The phrase, immortal animal, arises not from any correct understanding, but from a fiction. never having seen, nor being able to comprehend a deity, men conceived an immortal being, having a body as well as a soul, united together for all eternity. Let these things, then, be as it pleases God; but let us next state from what cause a soul becomes unfledged.

“It is the nature of wings to lift up heavy bodies towards the habitation of the gods; and of all things which belong to the body, wings are that which most partakes of the divine. The divine includes the beautiful, the wise, the good, and every thing of that nature. By these, the wings of the soul are nourished and increased; by the contraries of these, they are destroyed.

“Jupiter, and the other gods, divided into certain bands, travel about in their winged chariots, ordering and attending to all things, each according to his appointed function; and all who will, and who can, follow them. When they go to take their repasts, they journey uphill, towards the summit of the vault of heaven. The chariots of the gods, being in exact equilibrium, and therefore easily guided, perform this journey easily, but all others with difficulty; for one of the two horses, being of inferior nature, when he has not been exceedingly well trained by the driver, weighs down the vehicle, and impels it towards the earth.

“The souls which are *called* immortal (viz. the gods) when they reach the summit, go through, and standing upon the convex outside of heaven, are carried round and round by its revolution, and see the things which lie beyond the heavens. No poet has ever celebrated these super-celestial things, nor ever will celebrate them as they deserve. This region is the seat of *Existence* itself: Real Existence, colourless, figureless, and intangible Existence, which is visible only to Mind, the charioteer of the soul, and which forms the subject of Real Knowledge. The minds of the gods, which are fed by pure knowledge, and all other thoroughly well-ordered minds, contemplate for a time this universe of “Being” *per se*, and are delighted and nourished by the contemplation, until the revolution of the heavens bring them back to the same point. In this circumvolution, they contemplate Justice itself,

Temperance itself, and Knowledge, not that knowledge which has a generation or a beginning, not that which exists in a subject which is any of what we term beings, but that Knowledge which exists in Being in general; in that which really Is. After thus contemplating all real existences, and being nourished thereby, these souls again sink into the interior of the heavens, and repose.

“Such is the life of the gods. Of other souls, those which best follow the gods, and most resemble them, barely succeed in lifting the head of the charioteer into the parts beyond the heavens, and being carried round by the circumvolution, are enabled with difficulty to contemplate this universe of Self-Existences. Others, being encumbered by the horses, sometimes rising and sometimes sinking, are enabled to see some Existences only. The remainder only struggle to elevate themselves, and by the unskilfulness of their drivers, coming continually into collision, are lamed, or break their wings, and after much labour go away without accomplishing their purpose, and return to feed upon mere Opinion.

“The motive of this great anxiety to view the super-celestial plain of Truth, is, that the proper food of the soul is derived from thence, and in particular, the wings, by which the soul is made light and carried aloft, are nourished upon it. Now it is an inviolable law that any soul, which, placing itself in the train of the gods, and journeying along with them, obtains a sight of any of these self-existent Realities, remains exempt from all harm until the next circumvolution; and if it can contrive to effect this every time, it is for ever safe and uninjured. But if, being unable to elevate itself to the necessary height, it altogether fails of seeing these Realities, and, being weighed down by vice and oblivion, loses its wings and falls to the earth, it enters into and animates some Body. It never enters, at the first generation, into the body of a brute animal, but that which has seen most, enters into the body of a person who will become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or a person addicted to music, or to love: the next in rank, into that of a monarch who reigns according to law, or a warrior, or a man of talents for command: the third, into a person qualified to administer the state, and manage his family affairs, or carry on a gainful occupation: the fourth, into a person fond of hard labour and bodily exercises, or skilled in the prevention and curing of bodily diseases: the fifth, into a prophet, or a teacher of religious ceremonies: the sixth, into a poet, or a person addicted to any other of the imitative arts: the seventh,

into a husbandman or an artificer: the eighth, into a sophist, or a courtier of the people: the ninth, into a despot and usurper. And in all these different fortunes they who conduct themselves justly will obtain next time a more eligible lot; they who conduct themselves unjustly, a worse.

“The soul never returns to its pristine state in less than 10,000 years, for its wings do not grow in a shorter time; except only the soul of one who philosophises with sincerity, or who loves with philosophy. Such souls, after three periods of 1,000 years, if they choose thrice in succession this kind of life, recover their wings in the three thousandth year, and depart. The other souls, at the termination of their first life, are judged, and having received their sentence, are either sent for punishment into the places of execution under the earth, or are elevated to a place in heaven, in which they are rewarded according to the life which they led while here. In either case they are called back on the thousandth year, to choose or draw lots for a new life. Then a human soul often passes into the body of a beast, and that of a beast, if it has ever been human, passes again into the body of a man. For a soul which has never seen the Truth at all, cannot enter into the human form, it being necessary that man should be able to apprehend things according to *kinds*,\* which kinds are composed of many perceptions combined by reason into *one*. Now this mode of apprehending is neither more nor less than the *recollecting* of those things which the soul formerly saw when it journeyed along with the gods, and, disregarding what we now call beings, applied itself to the apprehension of Real Being. It is for this reason that the soul of the philosopher is re-fledged in a shorter period than others: for it constantly, to the best of its power, occupies itself in trying to recollect those things which the gods contemplated, and by the contemplation of which they are gods; by which means, being lifted out of, and above, human cares and interests, he is, by the vulgar, considered as mad, while in reality he is inspired.

“It will now appear, on consideration, that that fourth kind of madness of which we were before speaking, the madness of one who is a lover of beauty, is the best and most beneficial of all the enthusiasms which are inspired from heaven. For, as we

\* This may be rendered in the dialect of modern philosophy, to *abstract* and to *generalise*; which is here represented as the faculty which distinguishes man, the rational being, from the mere beasts.

have already said, every human soul has actually seen the Real Existences, or it would not have come into a human shape. But it is not easy for all of them to call to mind what they then saw: those especially, which saw that region for a short time only, and those which, having fallen to the earth, were so unfortunate as to be turned to injustice, and consequent oblivion of the sacred things which were seen by them in their prior state. Few, therefore, remain who are adequate to the recollection of those things. These few, when they see here any image or resemblance of the things which are there, receive a shock like a thunderbolt, and are in a manner taken *out of themselves*; but from deficiency of comprehension, they know not what it is which so affects them. Now, the likenesses which exist here of Justice and Temperance, and the other things which the soul honours, do not possess any splendour; and a few persons only, with great difficulty, by the aid of dull, blunt, material organs, perceive the terrestrial likenesses of those qualities, and recognise them. But Beauty was not only most splendid when it was seen by us forming part of the heavenly procession or quire, but here also the likeness of it comes to us through the most acute and clear of our senses, that of sight, and with a splendour which no other of the terrestrial images of super-celestial existences possess. They, then, who are not fresh from heaven, or who have been corrupted, are not vehemently impelled towards that Beauty which is aloft, when they see that upon earth which is called by its name; they do not, therefore, venerate and worship it, but give themselves up to physical pleasure, after the manner of a quadruped. But they who are fresh from those divine objects of contemplation, and who have formerly contemplated them much, when they see a godlike countenance or form, in which celestial beauty is imaged and well imitated, are first struck with a holy awe, and then, approaching, venerate this beautiful object as a god, and, if they were not afraid of the reputation of too raving a madness, would erect altars, and perform sacrifices to it. And the warmth and genial influence derived from the atmosphere which beauty generates around itself, entering through the eyes, softens and liquefies the inveterate induration, which coats and covers up the parts in the vicinity of the wings, and prevents them from growing: this being melted, the wings begin to germinate and increase, and this, like the growing of the teeth, produces an itching and irritation which disturbs the whole frame of the soul. When, therefore, by

the contemplation of the beautiful object, the induration is softened, and the wings begin to shoot, the soul is relieved from its pain and rejoices; but when that object is absent, the liquefied substance hardens again, and closes up the young shoots of the wings, which consequently boil up and throb, and throw the soul into a state of turbulence and rage, and will neither allow it to sleep nor remain at rest, until it can again see the beautiful object, and be relieved. For this reason it never willingly leaves that object, but for its sake deserts parents and brothers and friends, and neglects its patrimony, and despises all established usages and decorums on which it valued itself before. And this affection is Love.

“Now, those who in their former state followed in the train of Jupiter, can, when seized by love, more patiently bear the burthens occasioned by it; but those who served and followed Mars, when they fall in love, and think themselves wronged by the person whom they love, are ready to resort to violence, and immolate both the loved person and themselves. And every other soul, both in its loves and in all its other pursuits, follows to the best of its power the example and model of the god on whom it formerly attended. But those who attended on Jupiter seek to have for the object of their love one who resembles Jupiter in soul—one who is a philosopher, and fitted by nature to lead; and strive all they can that the object of their love, if not so already, shall become so. And if they themselves have not before applied to study, they do so, and endeavouring to image to their recollection the god to whom they were attached, model their habits and dispositions, as far as is in human power, from him. And ascribing this change in themselves to the object of their love, they become still fonder of that object, and communicate to it a share of what they themselves draw from Jupiter, and make the beloved person resemble as much as possible the god whom they imitate. In like manner, those who had been attendants upon Juno look out for a person of a regal disposition; those of Apollo, and all the other gods, similarly, look out for an object of love who is as like their god as possible, and if not so already they endeavour that it shall become so.

“We formerly distinguished the soul into three parts, two of them resembling horses, the third a charioteer. One of these horses we said was good, the other vicious. The better of the two is an upright noble animal, a lover of honour, sensible to

shame, and obeying the word of the driver without the lash. The other is crooked, headlong, fiery, insolent, deaf, and with difficulty yielding even to whip and spur.\* Now, when the driver is inflamed by love and desire for some beautiful human being, the tractable horse holds himself back, and restrains himself all he can from attempting any sensual enjoyment of the beloved object; but the other, setting whip and rein at defiance, struggles on, and compels his companion and the driver to rush towards the desired object, and consent to unchaste intercourse. When they come into its presence, and the charioteer, beholding it, is reminded of the ideal beauty which he has formerly seen, and sees it with his mind's eye joined with Continence and Purity in the super-celestial region, he is struck dumb, and falling backward in adoration, draws back the reins so violently, that both horses are forced back upon their haunches, the one willingly and unresisting, the other with a great struggle. After many vain attempts, in which the vicious beast suffers great torture, he is at length subdued and humbled, and when he comes into the presence of the beloved object, is so overcome with fear as to be easily governed.

“The mind of the lover being brought into this state, his constant attendance upon, and as it were worship of, the beloved object, in time inspires the latter with a corresponding affection: and the same stream of beauty and desire which has entered into the soul of the lover through his eyes, rebounds as from a wall when he is full, and enters into the person from whom it at first proceeded, in whom it in like manner melts the induration about the roots of the wings, and enables them to sprout. Thus both partake of love; and if, by orderly habits of life, and by philosophy, the better part of their nature retains the ascendancy, they lead a happy and united life, retaining command over themselves, being in strict subjection so far as regards the vicious part of their souls, and in full freedom in respect of the virtuous part. And after their death, being light and winged, and having achieved one of the three great victories, they have accomplished the greatest good which either human wisdom or divine madness can confer upon a human creature. But if their mode of life is more rude, and they are attached to the pursuit of honour rather than

\* The charioteer and the two horses in this allegory, are manifestly types of the three principles which, in the *Republic*, our author represents as the constituent elements of the mind—Reason, Honour, and Appetite.



of wisdom, perhaps in a moment of forgetfulness the incontinent horse of each of them, finding their souls unguarded, may bring them together, and cause them to accomplish what common persons celebrate as the summit of happiness. And this having been done, they subsequently persevere in the same intercourse, but sparingly, as doing what is not approved by the whole of their minds. These persons, too, are dear to one another, although less so than those of whom we formerly spoke: and both while their love continues and when it has ceased, they consider themselves as having given and received the greatest of pledges, which it would be impious to violate by becoming alienated. When these persons die, they quit the body, without wings indeed, but having them in an incipient state, and they have therefore no trifling reward for their love; for those who have once commenced the journey towards heaven cannot again descend into the subterranean darkness, but live happily together in the clear light, and when they recover their wings, recover them together.

"Such is the attachment of a lover. But that of a person who is not a lover, being a mere compound of mortal prudence, is sparing and no more than mortal in what it dispenses: it produces in the soul of the person who is the object of attachment, nothing but illiberality,\* which the vulgar praise as virtue. A soul so affected will be tossed about for 9,000 years, on the earth and under it."

Here Socrates terminates his long discourse, winding it up by a prayer to Love, to whom he offers the discourse as a *Palinodia*; and whose pardon he implores for having blasphemed against him, and lays the whole blame upon Lysias, whose mind he beseeches the god to turn to philosophy.

Phaedrus warmly applauded this discourse, which he allowed to be greatly superior to that of Lysias. "I am afraid," said he, "that Lysias would appear but poor, even if he attempted to write another speech against it. And, by the way, one of our politicians the other day inveighing against him, reproached him through the whole of his invective with being a *λογογράφος*, or speech-writer. Perhaps, therefore, he may, from care of his own estimation, give up the practice." Socrates laughed, and told Phaedrus that he mistook his friend if he thought him so fearful of censure. "So you think," he added, "that the man who thus reproached him meant what he said?" "It seemed so," answered Phaedrus, "and

\* ἀνελευθερία.

you are yourself aware that the men of importance and gravity in a state are ashamed to write speeches, and leave written memorials of themselves behind them, being afraid lest they should hereafter be reputed sophists.” \* Socrates replied jocularly, that on the contrary none were fonder of leaving written memorials behind them, and of being thought good writers, than politicians: for when they write any thing, they are so fond of those who applaud it, as always to name them at the very beginning of the writing. “Do not their writings always begin, Resolved by the senate, or by the people, or by both, on the proposition of such a one, meaning very gravely the writer himself; and does he not then go on showing off his own wisdom to his applauders, to the end of sometimes a very long paper? And if this be blotted out from the tablet on which it is inscribed, do not the composer and all his friends go away dissatisfied; and if it be thought worthy of being written and permanently recorded, is he not pleased? and if any of these men, either by his ascendancy as an orator, or by authority as a king, obtains the power of Lycurgus, or Solon, or Darius, which enables him to become a writer for immortality, does he not appear both to himself, and to posterity who read his writings, almost a god? It is evident, therefore, that such a man, if he reproaches Lysias, does not reproach him for being a writer. To write, therefore, is not disgraceful. To write ill, is so. What then is the manner of writing well or ill? Shall we ask this of Lysias, or any other writer who ever wrote either in poetry or prose?” “Shall we?” says Phaedrus—“what else do we live for, but for such pleasures as these? Not certainly for those pleasures, to the enjoyment of which a previous state of pain is necessary; which is the case with almost all the bodily pleasures; for which reason they are justly called servile.” “We have leisure,” answered Socrates, “and the *cicadæ* who are chirping and conversing with one another in the trees over our heads, would despise us if we, like the vulgar, instead of conversing, were to sleep out the hot part of the day, being lulled by their note through vacancy of mind. They would suppose that we were like cattle, who come down at mid-day to drink at the stream,

\* We think it not useless to note as it occurs, for the confusion of the Tory perverters of Grecian history, the evidence which perpetually presents itself of the disrepute in which the sophists were held by the Greeks, especially by the very class whom they are alleged to have corrupted, those, namely, who considered themselves as what in modern phrase would be styled “men of the world.”

and fall asleep. But if they see us conversing, and passing them by, like the Syrens, unfascinated, they will be pleased with us, and will, perhaps, confer on us the gift which they have from the gods to bestow upon men." "Have they such a gift?" asked Phaedrus, "for I never heard of it." "A lover of the Muses," replied Socrates, "ought not to be ignorant of this. It is said that the cicadae were men, before the Muses existed; but when the Muses were born, and song commenced, some of the men of that time were so engrossed by delight, that they passed their time in singing, and neglected to take food until they died. From them the race of the cicadae are sprung; and possess the gift from the Muses, not to need food or drink, but to sing continually until they die, and afterwards going to the abodes of the Muses, report to them who among mortals gives them honour."

Socrates and Phaedrus agreed accordingly to continue their conversation, and that the subject should be, what constituted good speaking and writing.

"Is it not necessary," asked Socrates, "in order to speak well, that the speaker should in his own mind know the truth, in respect to the subject concerning which he is to speak?"

"I have heard it said," answered Phaedrus, "that an orator need not know what is really just, but only what will appear so to the multitude who are to decide; and that he need not know what is really good, or beautiful, but what will appear so: for persuasion is produced by means of the *apparent*, not the *true*."

"We must not," said Socrates, "reject without examination what wise men affirm; we must inquire whether there is anything in it.

"Suppose that I wanted to persuade you to buy a horse in order to go forth and meet the enemy; and that we were both of us entirely ignorant of a horse, but I happened to know of you, that you believed a horse to be the most long-eared of all domestic animals."—"It would be ridiculous," answered Phaedrus. "Not yet," replied Socrates; "but what if I were seriously to set about persuading you, by composing a speech on the ass, calling it a horse, and celebrating it as the finest of animals for domestic use, for military service, for carrying goods, and a hundred other things?"—"It would be highly ridiculous." "Is it not better to be ridiculous, than a dangerous and pernicious friend?"—"Certainly." "But when an orator, being himself ignorant of good and evil, and finding a people equally so, sets about per-

suading them, not by a panegyric upon the ass under the name of the horse, but upon Evil under the name of Good; and having studied the opinions of the multitude, succeeds in persuading them to do what is bad instead of what is good, what sort of a harvest do you think that an oratory of this sort will reap?"—"But an indifferent one."

"Perhaps, however," resumed Socrates, "we are too severe upon oratory. She may, perhaps, turn upon us, and say, 'You are trifling, my good friends—I do not compel anyone to learn to speak, who is ignorant of the truth—I bid him learn the truth first, and resort to me afterwards—The ground of my pretensions is, that without me, though a man were to know all possible truths, he would be no nearer to possessing the art of persuading.' And in saying this, does she not speak truth?"—"Yes, if the arguments which are coming should testify that she *is* an Art; but I in a manner hear the rustle of several arguments approaching, which assert that she is an impostor, and no Art, but an unartificial Routine." "Call these arguments forth, then, and let us interrogate them. Come forth, I beg you, and persuade Phaedrus that unless he philosophise sufficiently, he will never be capable of speaking on any subject. Question Phaedrus, and he will answer. Is not the art of oratory, taken in a general sense, the *influencing of the mind by discourse*, not merely in courts of justice and public assemblies, but also in private life, whether on great subjects or on small?"—"Not entirely so. It is generally on the occasion of trials in courts of justice that men speak and write by art; and in deliberative assemblies they speak by art: but otherwise not." "Have you then heard tell only of the arts of oratory which were composed by Nestor and Ulysses at Troy, but not those of Palamedes?"—"No, nor of Nestor either, unless you call Gorgias Nestor, and Thrasymachus or Theodorus Ulysses." "Tell me, then, what do adversaries in a court of justice do? Do they not debate?"—"Yes." "About the just and unjust?"—"Yes." "He who does this by art, can make the same thing appear to the same persons, either just or unjust?"—"Yes." "And in deliberative assemblies, he can make the same thing appear as he pleases, either good for the state, or the contrary?"—"He can." "And do we not know that Palamedes of Elea could speak by art, in such a manner that his hearers should think the same things either like or unlike, one or many, stationary or moved?"—"Yes." "The art of debate, there-

fore, is not confined to courts of justice and public assemblies; but if it be an art, there is but one single art which, whatever be the subject of discourse, can make all things appear similar, which are capable of so appearing, and which, if another person does the same thing deceptively, can expose the deception.

"Is deception more likely to happen in those things which differ much, or in those which differ little?"—"In those which differ little." "You will more easily get round from a thing to its contrary, by insensible steps than all at once?"—"No doubt." "He, then, whose business is to deceive another, and not to be deceived himself, must know accurately the resemblances and differences of things?"—"He must." "Can he, not knowing the real nature of a thing itself, distinguish the degree of resemblance which other things bear to that thing?"—"It is impossible." "Since then, those who are deceived, and take up a false opinion, must have been led to it by some sort of resemblance (verisimilitude or likeness to the truth) it is clear, that a man cannot bring round another by little and little, through a chain of resemblances, from the truth to its contrary, or avoid being himself dealt with in the same manner, unless he knows the real natures of things; and the man who does not know the truth, but hunts after mere opinion, has got a ridiculous and very unart-like art of speaking." Phaedrus could not deny this; and Socrates proposed that they should look again at the discourse of Lysias, and see whether it contained evidence of art or no. Phaedrus assented, saying, that as yet they were somewhat bare, not having a sufficiency of examples. "It is perhaps lucky," rejoined Socrates, "that these discourses have been spoken, since they afford an example, how he who knows the truth may, in mere sport, mislead his audience by a speech."

Phaedrus now, according to agreement, begins to read the discourse of Lysias from the commencement. Before he has completed the second sentence, Socrates stops him, in order to point out already a proof of want of art.

"Is it not clear that about some things we are all of one mind, about others we differ?"—"I think I understand you, but nevertheless explain yourself more clearly." "When we use the words silver, or iron, we all of us mean the same thing by them. But when we speak of what is just, or of what is good, we all go off in different directions, and are at variance, both with each other and in ourselves."—Phaedrus assented. "In which of these two

kinds of things are we most easily deceived, and in which is the power of oratory the greatest?"—"In those in which we wander without fixed principles." "He, then, who seeks to acquire an art of oratory, should first be able properly to distinguish and characterise these two *kinds* of things, those in which the multitude must of necessity wander, and those in which they need not."—"This would be an admirable discovery." "And next, he must be able to distinguish and clearly perceive, without mistake, whether that of which he is about to speak, belongs to the one class or to the other."—"Granted."

"Now, should love be considered to be one of these disreputable things?"—"Undoubtedly: how else could you have made, as you did, two long speeches, one to show that love is injurious both to the lover and the loved, the other, that it is the greatest of blessings?" "You say truth; but now tell me (for I, on account of the state of inspiration in which I was, do not recollect) whether I began by *defining* love?"—"You did, most accurately." "How much more skilled, then, in the oratorical art, must be the nymphs and Pan, by whom I was inspired, than your friend Lysias! for he obliged us to begin by supposing, and not inquiring, what love is, and then grounded his entire discourses on a mere supposition.

"Does not, too, the discourse appear to you to be thrown together quite at random? Can it be said that what is placed second, for example, or in any other position, is placed there from any peculiar necessity? To me, who know nothing, he seemed to say, most undauntedly, whatever came into his head: but can *you* point out any oratorical necessity which compelled him to arrange his thoughts into that particular order?"—"You are very good, to suppose that I am capable of so accurately judging what such a man as Lysias composes." "But this I think you will allow, that a discourse should be like an organised creature, having a body of its own, neither headless nor footless, but having a middle, and extremities, fitted to one another, and to the whole."—"Without doubt." "But does anything of this kind appear in your friend's discourse?—look, and you will find it very like the inscription which they ascribe to Midas the Phrygian, which might be read either backwards or forwards without altering the sense."—"You are now only laughing at the discourse." "Let us then, in order not to offend you, let alone this oration, although it seems to me to contain a variety of examples, by the considera-

tion of which one might be improved. Let us pass to the other discourses: for in them too there were some things worth observing to those who are considering Discourse. There were two discourses; the one in disparagement, the other in eulogy of love."—"There were." "We affirmed that love was a sort of madness; did we not?"—"We did." "And said that there are two sorts of madness; one coming from human disease, the other from a divine influence. This last we divided into four kinds: viz., prophetic inspiration" [here, for the first time, the very word inspiration, or *afflatus* (ἐπιπνοία) is used], "the origin of which we ascribed to Apollo; mystico-religious (τελεστική), to Bacchus; poetic, to the Muses; and finally, that of which we are speaking, the inspiration or enthusiasm of Love."—"We did." "Let us now try whether we can catch the manner in which our discourse *changed* from blame to praise."—"What do you mean?" "To me it appears, that all the rest of what was said, was in reality no more than sport; but that if one could obtain by art, the power or capacity of these two kinds of operations, which in this instance we have performed by mere chance, it would be not unpleasant." "What things?" "To collect together a multitude of scattered particulars, and viewing them collectively, bring them all under one single *idea*,\* and thereby be enabled to *define*, and so make it clear what the thing is which is the subject of our inquiry. As, for instance (in our own case), what we said (whether it was well said or ill) with a view of defining love: for this was what enabled the subsequent discourse to be clear, and consistent with itself."—"You have described one of the two operations which you spoke of; what is the other?" "To be able again to subdivide this idea into species, according to nature, and so as not to break any part of it in the cutting, like a bad cook. Thus, for example, our two discourses agreed in taking for their subject, insanity of mind: but in the same manner as the body has two parts, which

\* This word signified originally Form. The use of the word "idea" in modern metaphysics is derived from this application of it by Plato. He means by it the notion of what is *common to an entire class*, or what Locke called an abstract idea. But Plato fell into the all-but-universal mistake of supposing that these abstract ideas had an independent existence; that they were real objective entities, and even that the Ideas of things were the exemplars after which the Divine Being made the things themselves. This notion, of the independent existence of abstract ideas, is frequently combated by Aristotle, but was revived by his followers under the altered name of *substantial forms*, and the same error under a variety of denominations has been continued down to the present day.

are called by the same name in all other respects, but one called the left side and the other the right, so our two discourses, taking insanity as one single *idea* \* existing in us, one of them cut down on the left side, and continued subdividing until it came to something sinister which bore the name of Love, and inveighed against it very deservedly; the other taking us to the right side, found another Love, a namesake of the first, but of a divine origin and nature, which is held forth and praised as the cause of our greatest blessings.

"I, then," continued Socrates, "being a lover of these compositions and decompositions, in order that I may be able to speak and to think; if I find any one whom I think capable of apprehending things as *one* and *many*, I run after him and follow his footsteps as I would those of a god. Those who can do this, whether I call them rightly or not God knows, but at present I call them dialecticians: but what are we to call those who learn from you and Lysias? Is this, of which we have been talking, the same with that Art of Speaking by the aid of which Thrasy-machus and the rest have become wise in speaking, and have made others so, who pay tribute to them as to kings?"—"They are kingly people," said Phaedrus, "but they are not acquainted with that of which you spoke. I think that you are right in calling this method *dialectics*; but it does not seem to me that we have yet found out what oratory is." "Indeed!" replied Socrates: "it must be something curious, if, being different from what we have been speaking of, it is nevertheless an art. Let us then see what else oratory consists of."—"Of a great many things, which we find in the books of rhetoric." "I thank you for putting me in mind. You mean such things as these; that the exordium should come first, then the narration and the testimony, then the positive circumstantial proofs, then the probable ones: and next, I believe the Byzantine Theodorus talks of confirmation and super-confirmation, refutation and super-refutation, and how all these things should be managed, both in accusation and in defence. And why should we leave out that excellent person, Euenus of Paros, who first invented *ὑποδήλωσις* and *παρεπαινοί*. (The first untranslatable, the second we suppose means *incidental praise*.) Some say he also has *παραπλόγοι* (incidental vituperation) which he has put into verse for the aid of memory; for he is a wise man. Can we omit, moreover, Tisias and Gorgias, who saw that the

\* The word here is *εἶδος*, *form* or *species*: substantially the same word as *ιδέα*.



*plausible* was to be honoured above the *true*, and who, by force of speaking, can make great things appear small, and small things great, new things old, and old things new, and who have found out the way to speak either briefly or to an interminable length on all subjects? Prodicus once, when I related this to him, laughed, and said *he* was the first person who had found out how to speak according to art: for the speech should be neither short nor long, but *moderate*.”—“Very wise indeed.” “Neither must we leave out Hippias of Elis, who I should think would be of the same opinion: and Polus, too, who invented διπλασιολογία,\* γνωμολογία,† and εικονολογία, and so forth.”—“And did not Protagoras do something of the same kind?” “He was skilled in ὀρθοέπεια,‡ and many other fine things. He excelled everybody in speeches of the lugubrious kind, about old age and poverty he was a terrible man for enraging people, and then cooling them, and the first of all men in inveighing and in replying to invective. About the concluding part of a speech they all seem to agree; some of them call it recapitulation, and others give it some other name.”—“You mean, summarily reminding the audience of what you have said?” “That is what I mean.”—“Have you anything else to relate which forms part of the art of oratory?” “There is very little else.”—“Let us then leave that very little alone, and examine these things a little more closely, that we may see what power the art has.” “Very great power indeed in a popular assembly.”—“Let us see.” “If,” Socrates continued, “any one were to come to your friend Eryximachus, or to his father, Acumenus, and say, ‘I know how to produce any effect I please upon the body, I can cool it or heat it, give it an emetic or a purge, and I therefore think myself a physician, and capable of making others so,’ what would they say?”—“They would ask him whether he likewise knows upon whom to produce these different effects, and when, and to what degree.” “And what if he were to answer—‘By no means; I insist that he who has learned from me what I before mentioned, will have that other sort of knowledge as a matter of course’?”—“They would reply, ‘The man is mad, and because he has accidentally discovered or read of some drug or other, fancies himself a physician, knowing nothing at all of the art.’” “And what if a man should go to Sophocles or Euripides,

\* διπλασιολογία = “double speaking,” that is, “speaking with a double meaning.”

† γνωμολογία = “speaking through proverbs or maxims,” “gnomic speech.”

‡ ὀρθοέπεια = “correct speaking.”

and say, 'I know how to make a long speech on a small matter, and a short one about a great matter, and I can make a pathetic speech, or a menacing one, or a fearful one, and being able to teach all this I can enable any man to write a tragedy'?"—"They too would laugh at the absurdity of supposing that tragedy consists in any thing but the *putting together* of these things so as to be suitable to one another and to the whole." "And if a musician met with a man who thought himself a harmonist because he could draw from the strings the most acute and the gravest sounds possible, he would not say to him fiercely, 'You stupid fellow! you are out of your wits'; but, as being a musician, and therefore of a softer and less inflammable temperament, he would say, 'My good friend, it is necessary for a harmonist to know these things, but a man may know all that you know and be not the least of a harmonist notwithstanding. You possess those acquirements which are preliminary to harmony, but not harmony itself.'"—"Very right." "Sophocles would say, in like manner, 'You know the preliminaries to tragedy, but not tragedy itself': and Acumenus would say, 'You know the preliminaries to medicine, but medicine itself you know not.'"—"Most true."

"What then do you think that the sweet-voiced Adrastus or Pericles would say, if they heard recited these splendid inventions which we were just talking of, *βραχυλογία*\* and *εικονολογια*† and the like? Would they, like us, say something sharp and coarse to those who write and teach these things under the name of oratory? or would they, as being wiser than we, reprove us for our violence, and say, 'O Phaedrus and Socrates, we ought not to be angry, but should excuse, if there be persons who, being unversed in *dialectics*, are unable to define what oratory is, and therefore, being possessed only of those acquirements which it is necessary should *precede* the art, fancy that they have found an art of oratory, and, teaching these things to others, think that they have taught them oratory itself; but think nothing of the power of doing each of these things *persuasively*, and of putting them together into a *whole*, and hold it unnecessary for their scholars to learn *this* from their tuition'?"

"I am afraid," observed Phaedrus, "that this art of oratory, as they call it, is indeed no better than you represent it. But

\* *βραχυλογία* = "brevity of speech."

† *εικονολογια* = "image-speaking" or "picturesque speaking."

from whence might one derive the art of the real orator—the power of *persuasion*?”

“The power,” replied Socrates, “if possessed to the degree which constitutes a perfect orator, is probably, or perhaps necessarily, governed by the same laws as any other power. If you have natural capabilities you may become an eminent orator, by the aid of knowledge and study; if you are wanting in any of these respects, you will be so far imperfect. But so much of it as is Art, appears to me to be acquired by a method not similar to that which Lysias and Thrasymachus use.”—“How then?”

“Pericles is perhaps the most complete orator ever known.”—“What then?”

“All the greater arts require the study of the abstruser parts of nature: from which alone loftiness and potency of intellect are derived: the qualities which, together with great natural aptness, Pericles possessed. He acquired them, as I imagine, by his intercourse with Anaxagoras, by whom he was introduced into the higher parts of knowledge, and penetrated to the nature of the thinking and the unthinking faculties of man, the subject which Anaxagoras chiefly treated of; and from this Pericles drew, for the art of speaking, as much as was applicable to it.”—“How so?”

“The art of oratory resembled that of medicine. In both, it is necessary to distinguish and subdivide the nature of body on the one hand, of mind on the other; if you intend to follow art, and not a mere empirical routine, in giving health and strength to the former by medicine and sustenance, and producing in the latter, by speech and precept, virtue and any persuasion which you desire.”—“This seems reasonable; but is it possible to comprehend well the nature of Mind, except by comprehending the nature of the universe? If Hippocrates is to be believed, even the body can be understood only by that method.”

“He speaks well: but besides Hippocrates, it is proper to interrogate likewise the argument, and discover whether it also will assent.”—“Let us see then.”

“Is not this the proper mode of examining into the nature of any thing—first to consider whether it is *simple* or *manifold*; then, if it is simple, to examine into its powers, that is, what affections it is capable of causing in other things, and other things in it: if, on the contrary, it consists of a variety of *sorts*, to enumerate them, and make the same inquiry with respect to each of the sorts; viz., in what manner it acts upon, and is acted upon by, other things?”—

“Undoubtedly; any other method would be like a blind man’s

walk." "But it is clear, that he who would teach another the art of speaking, must teach him accurately the nature of that which his speaking is intended to act upon; and this is, the mind."—"Agreed." "It is obvious, therefore, that Thrasy-machus, and any other who seriously attempts to teach oratory, must first examine and explain very carefully, whether the mind is *one* thing, perfectly resembling itself, or like the body, of many different kinds: since this is what we found to be the meaning of what we call unfolding its nature. Next, he must teach in what manner the mind, by its nature, affects, and is affected by, other things: and, thirdly, classing the different kinds of mind, the different modes of speaking, and the various properties of both, he must adapt the one to the other, and show, what sort of mind, is or is not persuaded, by what sort of speech, and why."—"Most true; and in no other way is it possible either to speak or write according to art."

"Since, in short, the end of speech is to influence the mind, he who understands oratory as an art, must know what are the different kinds of mind; what are the different modes of speaking; and, that a mind of such and such a sort, is likely to be persuaded by such and such a mode of speaking, but not likely to be persuaded by such and such another mode, and this for such and such a reason. And when he has mastered all this, unless he be also a ready observer of what actually goes on in the world, he will still know nothing but precisely what he has learned. But if he knows what sort of man is persuaded by what sort of speaking, and is able besides to distinguish in real life whether the man whom he is to persuade *is* that sort of man or not, then he will know what is the proper *time* for using your figures of rhetoric, your *βραχυλογία* and *ἐλλεινολογία*, and *δεινωσις*, and the rest; and then and not till then will he be a master of the *art*. Can you think of any other mode?"—"No." "Let us strive all we can to find whether there be any shorter and smoother road to the oratorical art, that we may not take a roundabout way when there is a shorter cut. Can you recollect any thing of that sort which you have heard from Lysias?"—"I do not." "Shall I tell you then what I have sometimes heard people say? for it is said that even the wolf ought to have a fair hearing?"—"By all means."

"They say, then, that there is no need to make oratory so various a matter, or go so far back in order to arrive at it. The orator has nothing to do with what is just or good, either in things

or men: it is not the *true* which any one cares for in a court of justice, but the *plausible*: and probability is all which he who speaks according to art, needs attend to. It is not proper even to assert what actually happened, if the story be not a probable one: and in short the probable, and not the true, should be our aim in accusation or defence, and the art of attaining it is the only art of oratory required."

"This," replied Phaedrus, "is what those say who profess to understand the art of speaking." "You have read Tisias: does not Tisias understand by the *probable*, that which accords with the opinion of the multitude?"—"He does." "This, then, is his wise invention; that if a feeble but brave man is brought to trial for knocking down and robbing a robust coward, neither of them should speak the truth, but the coward should say, that more than one man attacked him; the other denying this and proving that they were alone, should ask, 'How could so weak a person as I, think of attacking so strong a man?' whereupon the first should not plead his own cowardice, but should invent some other falsehood to confute that of his adversary."—"A clever and recondite art truly." "But did we not before agree that this Probable, which Tisias aims at, is probable (that is, believed by the multitude) only on account of its similitude to the truth? and that he who knows the truth, is the best judge of degrees of resemblance to it? We shall therefore continue to believe, as we said before, that without understanding the nature of the different sorts of hearers, and being able to distinguish things into their kinds, and again to aggregate a number of particulars into one *whole*, it is impossible to attain the highest excellence which man is capable of, in the art of speaking. All this, however, cannot be learned without great study; which study a wise man ought to perform, not for the mere sake of speaking and transacting among men, but in order to be able to speak and act agreeably to the gods. Men wiser than we, have said that we ought not to make it our object to please our fellow-servants, except as a work of super-erogation: but to please good masters. It is no wonder, therefore, if the course is long and roundabout: for there is a great purpose to be served by making this circuit—a far greater purpose than that which Tisias aims at; though even that is to be attained most effectually by the same means.

"So much then on the subject of the art of speaking. It remains to consider in what consists propriety or impropriety of writing.

“Do you know what mode of dealing with discourse is most agreeable to a divinity?”—“No: do you?” “I can relate what has been heard from the sages of old. Whether it is true, the gods themselves alone know. But if we could find this, should we, after that, care for the opinions of men?”—“It would be ridiculous: but pray tell us what you say you have heard.” “I have heard that at Naucratis in Egypt, there resided one of the ancient gods of that country, named Theuth, who first invented numbers, and calculation, and geometry, and astronomy, and dice-playing, and, among other things, writing. Now, Thamos being king in Egypt, who is likewise a god, and whom the Greeks call Ammon, Theuth went to him and expounded to him these arts, and spoke of the great advantage of communicating them to the other Egyptians. The other asked him the use of each art, and praised or blamed it according to the answer he received. Now when the art of writing came under consideration, Theuth said, ‘This art will make the Egyptians wiser, and will aid their memory: for it is a help to memory and to wisdom.’ The other answered, ‘Most sage Theuth, it is one thing to be able to invent an art, and another to judge of its beneficial or hurtful effects: and now you, who are the inventor of writing, have ascribed to it, from partiality, an effect the exact opposite of its real one: this art will produce forgetfulness in those who learn it, by causing them to trust to written memoranda, and neglect their memory. What you have discovered, therefore, is an aid not to memory, but to recollection; and you will give to your scholars the *opinion* of wisdom, not the reality: for hearing much from you, without really learning it, they will appear men of great acquirements, though really for the most part ignorant and incapable.’”

Phaedrus here observed, “You very easily invent Egyptian tales, or tales of any country you please.” “They say,” replied Socrates, “that the first prophecies, those at Dodona, were delivered by an oak. The men of those days, not being so wise as we moderns, were so silly as to be content to listen to an oak or a stone, provided it did but speak the truth: but to you perhaps it is of importance who the speaker is, and from whence he comes: for you do not consider merely whether the fact is or is not so.”—“Your reproof is just.” “He then who thinks that he can leave behind him an art in a book, and he who learns it out of a book, and thinks he has got something clear and solid, are extremely simple, and do not know the saying of Ammon, or they would not

suppose that a written book could do anything more than remind one who knows already.

“ Writing is something like painting: the creatures of the latter art *look* very like living beings; but, if you ask them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. Written discourses do the same: you would fancy, by what they say, that they had some sense in them; but, if you wish to learn, and therefore interrogate them, they have only their first answer to return to all questions. And when the discourse is once written, it passes from hand to hand, among all sorts of persons—those who can understand it, and those who cannot. It is not able to tell its story to those only to whom it is suitable; and when it is unjustly criticised, it always needs its author to assist it, for it cannot defend itself.

“ There is another sort of discourse, which is far better and more potent than this.”—“ What is it? ” “ That which is written scientifically in the learner’s mind. This is capable of defending itself; and it can speak itself, or be silent, as it sees fit.”—“ You mean the real and living discourse of the person who understands the subject; of which discourse the written one may be called the picture? ” “ Precisely. Now, think you that a sensible husbandman would take seed which he valued, and wished to produce a harvest, and would seriously, after the summer had begun, scatter it in the gardens of Adonis,\* for the pleasure of seeing it spring up and look green in a week? or, do you not rather think that he might indeed do this for sport and amusement, but, when his purpose was serious, would employ the art of agriculture, and, sowing the seed at the proper time, be content to gather in his harvest in the eighth month? ”—“ The last, undoubtedly. ” “ And do you think that he who possesses the knowledge of what is just, and noble, and good, will deal less prudently with *his* seeds than the husbandman with his? ”—“ Certainly not. ” “ He will not, then, seriously set about sowing them with a pen and a black liquid; or (to drop the metaphor), scattering these truths by means of discourses which cannot defend themselves against attack, and which are incapable of adequately expounding the truth. No doubt, he will, for the sake of sport, occasionally scatter some of the seeds in this manner, and will thus treasure up memoranda for himself, in case he should fall into the forgetfulness of old age, and for all others who follow

\* To what this alludes we are ignorant, and have not at present the means of investigating. The gardens of Adonis were possibly some forcing ground.

in the same track; and he will be pleased when he sees the blade growing up green. When others play and amuse themselves in other ways, soaking themselves with wine, and so forth, *he* will choose this as his amusement.”—“And a far better one than the other.” “Assuredly; but it is a far better employment still, when any one, employing the dialectical art, and finding a mind which affords a suitable soil, sows and plants therein, with knowledge, discourses which can defend themselves and him who sows them, and which are not barren, but in their turn bear seed, from whence other discourses being reared up in other minds, can make their truths immortal, and can give to those who possess them, as much happiness as man is capable of.

“We have now, then, found what we were seeking for; viz., to be enabled to judge whether it is justly a reproach to Lysias to be a writer of discourses; and what was the difference between discourses according to art, and those which are without art.

“On the subject of art, we have come to the conclusion, that unless a man knows the truth on the subject on which he speaks or writes, and can define the subject itself, and divide it into kinds until he reaches the indivisible; and, unless he understands the nature of Mind, and having found out what kind of discourse is suitable to each kind of mind, adapts his discourse accordingly (giving to minds of complex and diversified structure, discourses of the same kind, and to simple minds, simple discourses)—unless he does all this, he does not possess, in the greatest perfection, the art of discourse, whether his end in discoursing be to instruct, or only to persuade.

“And we can now answer the other question, whether to be a writer of discourses is a reproach. If either Lysias, or any other man, composes a written discourse on political affairs, and fancies that there is much of clearness and solidity in it, *this* is a reproach to the writer, no doubt; for, not to know what is valuable and what is otherwise, in respect to justice and injustice, good and evil, is a reproach, even though the crowd should be unanimous in their applause of it. But a person who thinks that what is said upon any subject in a written treatise can be no better than sport, and that nothing worthy of very serious attention was ever written or delivered in a speech, and that the best of them are nothing more than memoranda to remind those who already know, and that there is nothing satisfactory or complete, or worthy to be seriously considered, but in the discourses which



are really taught and learnt and written in the mind; and that such discourses are the legitimate offspring of ourselves, first the one which is in our own minds (if we have one, and planted it there), and next those brothers or children of it, which have sprung up at the same time in other minds of other persons; this is such a person as you, Phaedrus, and I, should wish to be.”—Phaedrus assented.

“Do you, then, tell Lysias, that we two came down here, to the fountain of the nymphs, and that the nymphs bid us tell him and all other speech writers, Homer and all other poets, Solon and all others who write what they call laws, that if they composed these writings knowing what the truth is, and being able to maintain a discussion on the matters of which they wrote, and to make, by what they speak, what they have written appear insignificant, they ought not to be named from this lighter pursuit, but from their more serious occupation.”—“What name would you give them?” “*Wise* appears to me too assuming a name, and fit only for a God; but *Seeker of Wisdom* (*φιλοσοφος*, whence the modern word “philosopher”) would be a more suitable and decorous appellation.”—“Agreed.” “He, on the other hand, who has not in himself anything of a higher and more perfect kind than what he puts down in writing, *he* may be justly called a poet, or a speech-writer, or a law-writer.”—“Allowed.” “Then tell this to your friend.”

They here end their discourse; but before they quit the spot, Socrates suggests the propriety of addressing a prayer to the deities of the place. His prayer is as follows: “O Pan, and whatever other gods preside over this spot, grant to me to be beautiful inwardly; and let my outside, whatever it is, be suitable to what I have within. The rich man, in my estimation, is the man who is wise; but of gold, let me have so much as can be sufficient to no one save the prudent and temperate.”

“Is there anything else which we are in want of, Phaedrus? My wants have been tolerably well cared for in this prayer.”—“Offer up the same prayer for me: friends have all their affairs in common.” “Let us depart.”

It will have been remarked that Socrates himself treats the whole of this conversation as of no serious moment (*sport*, as he terms it), except the concluding discussion; the object of which is one that is incessantly aimed at in the writings of Plato. This

is, in the first place, to enforce the absolute necessity, as the foundation for all safe practice, of a just and unambiguous *definition* of the subject-matter; and, secondly, to show that this definition can only be arrived at by an operation which we should call a philosophical *analysis*, and which he describes as a process of composition and decomposition, or rather decomposition and recomposition; first distinguishing a whole into its kinds or parts, and then looking at those kinds or parts attentively, in such a manner as to extract from them the idea of the whole. This two-fold process of analysis and synthesis is the grand instrument of Plato's method of philosophising. In the comprehension of the *general ideas* thus obtained (or, as he expresses it in this dialogue, the apprehension of the same thing as One and as Many), philosophy, according to him, consisted. And this principle is the corner-stone, not only of his logic, but of his metaphysics.

All who possess the faculty of recognising identity of thought notwithstanding diversity of language (which, with the converse power of detecting difference of meaning under identity of expression, is the first characteristic of an intellect fit for philosophy) will perceive that this principle of Plato's is one on which all systems of logic are substantially in accordance. Bacon, Locke, Condillac, Stewart, and Kant (we need not prolong the enumeration) have concurred, both in using and in recommending the method of philosophising which Plato inculcates; though they are distinguished from one another by the different degree of clearness which the Platonic principle had assumed in their own minds, and the diversity of the substructure of metaphysical doctrines (for systems of metaphysics, like some birds' nests, are built downwards, not upwards) which they have constructed underneath it.

When, for instance, Bacon, in defining the scope of all inquiries into the phenomena of nature, directs the inquirer to collect and compare all the accessible *instances* in which any phenomenon (say heat or cold, hardness or softness) manifests itself, and thence to deduce the nature, or as he calls it, the *form*, of Heat in general, Cold in general, Hardness and Softness in general (*forma calidi aut frigidi, &c.*), wherein does this view of philosophic method differ from Plato's? Where, again, a disciple of Locke or Condillac describes philosophy as consisting in abstraction and generalisation, in the distribution of the objects of nature into convenient *classes*, and (by comparison of the different objects

composing each class) framing *general propositions* expressive of the distinguishing properties of the class; this too is identical with Plato's process of arriving at the knowledge of a thing by apprehending it as Many and as One. To apprehend it as Many, is to survey the various objects comprised in the class, and note their resemblances and differences. To apprehend it as One, is to evolve from this comparison a general definition of the class, omitting none of the properties by which as a class it is characterised.

When, however, these various philosophers, not content with cultivating the field of Logic (or the science of the investigation of truth), have dug down into that region of metaphysics which lies under logic, as it does under all the other sciences, and which must be examined before we can be sure that any of them are securely placed; the different explorers have brought up very different reports of what they have found there. While all agree in representing it as at least *one* of the principal aims of philosophy, to determine with precision the *ideas* as they are termed by Plato, the *essences* as others have called them, of those great genera and species under which we necessarily or habitually arrange all the objects of our knowledge, philosophers have differed, even to contrariety, in their notions of the real nature of those genera and species. Some have ascribed to them an *objective* reality, as things existing in themselves; others, more philosophically, have considered them as merely *subjective*, the creatures of our own minds. To state the same thing more clearly—some, including the greater number of the philosophers of the last two centuries, consider classification to be conventional, subject to no laws but those which convenience prescribes; while others, including most of the ancients, and the prevailing sect among the Aristotelian schoolmen of the Middle Ages, thought that genera and species exist by nature; that every individual thing naturally belongs to a certain species, and cannot be subjected to any other classification; and that as there are individual substances, so there are also universal substances, corresponding to our general or class names, and with which the individual substances which we rank under those classes are in a sort of mysterious communion. Thus, there are not only individual men, and individual stars, but there is also Man in general, and Star in general; which do not consist of individual men or stars considered in the aggregate, but are entities existing *per se*. John, Peter, or Paul are only constituted

*men* by participating, in some strange way, in this universal essence of humanity.

We have stated this doctrine in its most systematic form and in its extreme extent, as it was conceived by that portion of the schoolmen called the Realists, who, however, had little warrant for it from the oracle in which they implicitly confided, their master Aristotle. To the same school, though in a somewhat qualified sense, the speculations of Plato decidedly assimilate him. His tendencies (for opinions, let us once more repeat, are not on such subjects to be ascribed to him) led him to attribute self-existence to genera and species. In the present dialogue he adverts only to those genera which form the basis of our great moral and emotional (or as the Germans say, aesthetic) classification. The Just, the Brave, the Holy, the Beautiful (in English we more readily personify these abstractions by the words Justice, Courage, Holiness, Beauty) existed according to him as essences or Ideas, of which all sublunary things which we decorate by these names were but resemblances or copies: a doctrine shadowed forth in the mythos which occupies so conspicuous a place in the present dialogue. But the Ideas or essences of all other things had equally, in his view, an independent existence; and to these pre-existent ideas as his types or exemplars, the Creator fashioned all that he called into existence by his will. This is the doctrine more or less vaguely alluded to by those who speak of the Platonic or as it is sometimes called the Divine Idea.

Views not indeed the same but analogous to these, are professed at this day by most German philosophers, and by their followers in France and England. It is natural that persons holding such opinions should deem these Ideas (for they have endeavoured to bring back the Platonic word to its Platonic sense) to be the objects of the highest knowledge; the knowledge to which the term Philosophy ought to be confined; and that to apprehend an idea "as One and as Many," to detect and distinguish it when "immersed in matter" and clothed in innumerable circumstances, should be in their estimation the triumph and the test of philosophic inquiry.

The more rational metaphysics which prevail among most English and French philosophers lead to logical results not so different from these as the difference of the premises might lead one to suppose. Though classification be conventional, all science consists in generalisation, and our attainments in science

may be measured by the number of general truths which we are acquainted with; that is, by the amount of what we are able to predicate of classes. And, as we are at liberty to take any of the properties of an object for principles of classification, we can only know the essences of all possible classes by knowing all that is to be known concerning objects. In this sense, all science may be said, even by a follower of Locke or Condillac, to consist in knowing the essences of classes.

To apprehend with accuracy and distinctness all that is included in the conception of the classes which we have formed for ourselves, or which have been formed for us by our predecessors, does not according to this theory as according to Plato's, *constitute* philosophy; but whoever takes this as his object, will scarcely fail of attaining all the other results which philosophy proposes to itself; at least in the field of morals and psychology; where the desideratum is not so much new facts, as a more comprehensive survey of known facts in their various bearings, all of which are sure to be successively forced upon the attention by a well-conducted and unbiassed inquiry into the meaning of established terms, or, what is the same thing, into the essences of established classes. And this is the substance of Plato's analytic method.

### III

#### THE GORGIAS

THE dialogue on which we are now about to enter is among the most celebrated of Plato's works, and deserves peculiar attention, as one of those on which his fame as an ethical writer is principally founded. The perusal of it is well fitted to suggest many reflections on the nature of ethical writing in general, and on the principles by which our estimation of a moralist ought to be guided; for some of which reflections we may, perhaps, find room at the conclusion of this notice. We shall now, without further delay, introduce the reader to Plato himself; merely premising, as to the tendencies of the dialogue, that its whole drift and scope is to discredit mere worldly-minded men, and the teachers of those arts, or rather pursuits (for our author uniformly refuses to them the name of arts), which conduce only to worldly success; and to enforce, by all manner of considerations, the superior dignity and eligibility of a virtuous life, compared with the most successful achievements of a life of mere ambition, in which no moral obligations are recognised, or in which, if recognised, they are not regarded.

As this dialogue is one of the finest specimens both of Plato's dialectical powers, and of his extraordinary dramatic talent, our abstract of it shall be fuller than usual.

Gorgias, of Leontium, the celebrated rhetorician, and a younger teacher of the same art, named Polus, are sojourning at Athens, in the house of Callicles, a man not otherwise known to us, but who seems to have been what is called a politician (*πολιτικός*), a frequenter of, and speaker at, the public assemblies, the great object of whose life was the attainment of influence in public affairs. To this house Socrates, with his friend Chaerephon, pays a visit, and finds that Gorgias has just terminated a long exposition, or lecture. Socrates, however, expressed a hope that Gorgias would still consent to expound to him; as he was desirous to hear from himself, what was the power of his art, and what it was he professed to teach: the remainder of his exposition might be postponed to another time. Callicles replied,

that there was nothing like asking the man himself; and that he had, in fact, undertaken to answer whatever questions any one thought fit to ask. Socrates therefore requested Chaerephon, who was previously acquainted with Gorgias, to ask. "Ask what?" said Chaerephon. "Ask him what he is."—"How?" "So that, if he made shoes, he would answer that he is a shoemaker: do you understand me?"—"Yes," answered Chaerephon, and addressed Gorgias thus: "Is it true, O Gorgias, as Callicles tells me, that you offer to answer any sort of questions?"—"It is. I said so just now; and no one, for many years past, has asked me any question which was new to me." "Then you must be very ready at answering."—"You have it in your power to try me." "Yes," said Polus (interposing in the conversation), "and me likewise, if you like: for Gorgias seems to me to be tired, having just now spoken at great length." "Do you think," said Chaerephon, "that you can answer better than Gorgias?"—"Of what consequence is that, if I can answer well enough for you?" "Answer then. If Gorgias were skilled in the same art as his brother Herodicus, what ought we to call him?"—"What his brother is; a physician: is it not so?" "Certainly. If he were acquainted with the same art as Aristophon, what ought we to call him?"—"A painter." "But now, since he is skilled in some art, what is the name that we ought to give him?"—"O Chaerephon," answered Polus, "there are among men many arts, skilfully derived from skill. Skill makes our lives pass according to art; want of skill according to chance. Some partake of some of these arts, others of others: the best persons partake of the best arts; of whom Gorgias is one, and partakes of the noblest of arts."

Socrates now interposes, and addressing Gorgias, observes, that Polus seems to be well provided with words, but that he has not performed what he promised to Chaerephon. "What is that?" answered Gorgias. "He does not answer the question which was put to him." "Suppose that you were to question him yourself."—"If you will permit me, I would much rather question *you*: for it is clear to me, from what Polus said, that he has bestowed more attention upon what is called rhetoric, than upon the art of discussion (or dialectics)." "How so?" asked Polus.—"Because, when Chaerephon asked you what was the art which Gorgias taught, you panegyrised the art, as if somebody had censured it, but what it was you did not tell." "Did I not

say that it was the noblest of arts?"—"Very true: but nobody asked you what was the quality of Gorgias's art, but what was the nature of it, and what Gorgias ought to be called. As then Chaerephon put his first questions well, and you answered well and briefly, so now answer me what is the art of Gorgias, and what he is to be called: or rather, Gorgias, do you yourself tell us what art it is which you practice." "Rhetoric," answered Gorgias. "You are, then, a rhetorician?"—"A good one, if, as Homer says, you call me that which I boast of being." "And you are capable of making others so?"—"I profess to be capable."

SOCRATES: "Should you, Gorgias, be willing to continue questioning and answering as we have now begun, and to let alone, until another occasion, that length of discourse which Polus began with? If, however, you promise, do not fail to perform, but answer with brevity what is asked." GORGAS: "Some answers it is impossible to give, except at considerable length: but I will attempt to do it as briefly as possible: for this, too, is one of the things which I profess; that no one can say the same thing in fewer words than myself." S.: "This is what there is now occasion for: be pleased, therefore, to exemplify your brevity now, and your power of enlarging another time."

"Since rhetoric is the thing you are skilled in, what is the subject-matter which rhetoric relates to? Weaving relates to the making of clothing; does it not?" G.: "Yes." S.: "And music is about the making of songs?" G.: "Yes." S.: "What, then, is rhetoric about?" G.: "About discourse."

S.: "What sort of discourse? that which teaches the sick by what regimen they may get well?" G.: "No." S.: "Rhetoric, then, does not relate to all sorts of discourse." G.: "It does not." S.: "But it makes men able to speak." G.: "It does." S.: "And on the matters on which it makes them able to speak, it makes them able likewise to think." G.: "Certainly." S.: "Now, does not the art of medicine enable people to speak and think concerning the sick?" G.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "Then medicine likewise relates to discourse; viz., discourse on the subject of diseases." G.: "It does." S.: "And gymnastics \* relate to discourse; viz., discourse on the subject of good and bad

\* By the word "gymnastics," as will be seen throughout this dialogue, the Greeks understood, not any particular sort of bodily exercises, [but] the entire art of training the bodily frame of man for the ends of an active life.



habits of body." G.: "Without doubt" S.: "And the same thing may be said of all other arts: each of them relates to discourse; viz., discourse respecting the subject with which that particular art is conversant." G.: "It appears so." S.: "Why, then, do you not call the other arts rhetoric, being on the subject of discourse, if you call that which is on the subject of discourse by the name of rhetoric?" G.: "Because the other arts relate, in a manner, entirely to manual operations, and such like things: but rhetoric has nothing to do with manual operations; its whole agency and force are by means of discourse."

S.: "Now I partly understand what you mean; but I hope to understand it still better. Are there not two kinds of arts? In the one kind, the greater part of the art lies in action, and these arts have occasion for but little discourse; some of them require none at all, and might be performed in silence, such as painting, sculpture, and so forth. This is the class to which you say that rhetoric does not belong: do you not?" G.: "You understand me rightly." S.: "But there is another kind, which perform all by discourse, and require no action, or very little, such as arithmetic and geometry, and many others, some of which have about an equal share of action and of discourse, but the greater part have scarcely anything except discourse and effect all their purposes by means of it: and I understand you to say that rhetoric is one of these." G.: "True." S.: "But you do not call any of the arts which I have mentioned, rhetoric? although in words you said as much, saying that rhetoric is the art of which the whole power consists in discourse; and if any one wished to cavil, he might ask, Do you, then, call arithmetic rhetoric? But I do not believe that you call either arithmetic or geometry by that name." G.: "You think rightly." S.: "Then finish the answer to my question. Since rhetoric is one of the arts which chiefly employ discourse, and since there are others which do the same, explain to me on what subject it is that rhetoric employs discourse. Thus, if any one asked me, What is arithmetic? I might answer as you did, It is one of the arts whose force consists in discourse. And if he should further inquire, On what subject? I should reply, On the subject of numbers. Since, then, rhetoric is one of the arts which effect their end wholly by means of discourse, what is the subject of the discourse which rhetoric employs?" G.: "The greatest and best of the concerns of man."

"But this answer," observed Socrates, "is disputable and

ambiguous. I suppose you have heard at entertainments the old song, Health is the best of all things, beauty the second best, and the third is to be rich without guilt" G.: "I have: but to what purpose is this?" S.: "Because the providers of the three things which are praised in the old song, viz. the physician, the teacher of gymnastics, and the man of business, might start up, and, first, the physician might say, Gorgias deceives you, Socrates: it is not his art, but mine, which relates to the greatest and best concerns of man. And if I asked, Who are you who speak in this manner? he would answer, A physician. And if I rejoined, How do you prove the object of your art to be the greatest good? How can it be otherwise? he would reply: What greater good is there to man than health? In like manner the gymnast, and the man of business, would each set up the claim of his art to be the art which is conversant with the greatest good. I should answer, But Gorgias contends that his art produces a greater good to man than yours. They would then reply, And what is this good? Let Gorgias answer. Consider yourself, then, to be interrogated both by them and by me, and answer, What is this which you consider the greatest good to man, and of which you profess to be the artist?"

"It is," replied Gorgias, "that which is really the greatest good, and which both enables men to be themselves free, and enables each, in his own state, to govern the rest." S.: "And what is this?" G.: "The ability to *persuade*, by discourse, either judges in a tribunal, or senators in a council-house, or voters in a meeting of the people, and in every other political assembly. If you have this power, you will have the physician for your slave, the gymnast for your slave, and the man of business will transact business for the profit, not of himself, but of you who are able to speak and persuade the multitude."

"Now," replied Socrates, "you appear to me to come near to an explanation what art you consider rhetoric to be. If I understand you, rhetoric is that which works *persuasion*; and its whole agency is summed up and terminates in that. Or can you point out anything which rhetoric can do, more than to produce persuasion in the minds of the hearers?" G.: "No: you seem to me to define it adequately."

"Hear me, then," said Socrates. "I persuade myself, that if there is any person who converses with another wishing to arrive at a real knowledge of the thing which the discussion relates to,

I am such a person: and I wish you to be so." G.: "What then?" S.: "I will tell you. What, and on what topics this persuasion is, which you say results from rhetoric, I do not clearly know; and though I certainly suspect, I will nevertheless ask you. Now, why do I, suspecting it myself, question you, and not myself declare it? Not on your account, but for the sake of the discussion, that it may proceed in such a manner as to make that about which we are talking clearest to us. Consider then whether I interrogate you fairly. If I were to ask you, What painter is Zeuxis? and you were to answer, The man who paints animals; might I not fairly ask you, What animals, on what material?" G.: "Certainly." S.: "Because there are other painters who paint other animals." G.: "Yes." S.: "But if nobody had ever painted animals except Zeuxis, your answer would have been right." G.: "Certainly." S.: "Now then, on the subject of rhetoric, tell me, whether rhetoric is the only art which produces persuasion. What I mean is this: when a man teaches any thing, does he persuade people of that which he teaches, or not?" G.: "He persuades more than any body." S.: "To return to our former examples—does not arithmetic, and does not the arithmetician, teach us the properties of numbers?" G.: "Yes." S.: "Then they persuade us." G.: "Yes." S.: "Then arithmetic also works persuasion." G.: "So it seems." S.: "Then if we are asked, What persuasion, and respecting what? we should answer, The persuasion which instructs us respecting the properties of numbers. And in like manner we can show what persuasion, and on what matter, is wrought by each of the other arts which we mentioned." G.: "Yes." S.: "Then rhetoric is not the only worker of persuasion?" G.: "True." S.: "Then we may ask you, What persuasion, and on what matter, is wrought by rhetoric?" G.: "The persuasion of courts of justice and other assemblies, and on the subject of the just and the unjust."

S.: "I suspected that you meant this kind of persuasion, and on this subject. But that you may not be surprised if I should hereafter ask you something which, like this, appears obvious, I do so in order that the argument may be carried straight through: not on your account, but that we may not accustom ourselves to anticipate each other's meaning by guess; and that you may complete your exposition in your own manner." G.: "You do very right." S.: "Let us then consider this. There is such a

thing as to learn?" G.: "Yes." S.: "And such a thing as to believe?" G.: "Yes." S.: "To believe and to learn, are these the same thing, or different things?" G.: "Different things, I conceive." S.: "You conceive rightly, as may be known from this: If you were asked whether there are true belief and false belief, you would say, Yes." G.: "I should." S.: "But are there true knowledge and false knowledge?" G.: "No." S.: "Then they are not the same thing?" G.: "They are not." S.: "But they who have learnt, and they who only believe, are both of them persuaded?" G.: "They are." S.: "Shall we say, then, that there are two kinds of persuasion, the one affording belief without knowledge, the other affording knowledge?" G.: "Yes." S.: "Which sort of persuasion does rhetoric produce in courts of justice and other assemblies, respecting the just and the unjust? The sort which produces belief without knowledge, or that which produces knowledge?" G.: "Evidently that which produces belief." S.: "Rhetoric, then, works the persuasion of belief, not the persuasion of knowledge, respecting the just and the unjust?" G.: "Yes." S.: "The orator then does not instruct courts of justice and other assemblies respecting the just and the unjust, but only persuades them: for he could not, in a short time, instruct a large assembly in such great matters?" G.: "Certainly not." S.: "Let us see then what we are to think of rhetoric, for I do not know what to say about it. When an assembly is called together for the choice of physicians, or of ship builders, or any other sort of artists, will the rhetorician then not offer his opinion? for it is clear that in every election, whoever is the greatest master of the art ought to be chosen. If the question relate to the building of walls, or the construction of ports or docks, will the advisers be not the rhetoricians, but the engineers? If it relate to the choice of generals, or the operations of warfare, will the men versed in military affairs advise, and the rhetoricians not? or how is it? for since you say that you are a rhetorician, and can make others so, it is right to ask of you what belongs to your art. Consider me to be advancing your own interests also: for there are perhaps some persons here who wish to become your disciples. Imagine that you are asked by them, What shall we get by your instructions? on what subject shall we be able to advise the state? on the just and the unjust only, or on the other matters also, which Socrates just now mentioned?"

"I will endeavour," answered Gorgias, "to unfold to you clearly the whole power of rhetoric; for you have well led the way. You know that the walls, and docks, and harbours of Athens were constructed by the advice of Themistocles and of Pericles, not by that of the workmen." S.: "They say so of Themistocles; and Pericles I have myself heard." G.: "And when there is a choice to be made on these matters, you see that the orators are those who prevail, and carry the people along with them." S.: "It is the wonder which this excites in me, that makes me so anxious to find out what is the power of rhetoric; for, when considered in this light, it appears a thing of astonishing greatness." G.: "If you knew all, you would see that it comprises and holds subject to itself almost all other powers. I will give you a remarkable proof: Often have I gone, with my brother and other physicians, to visit a sick man who would not take medicine or undergo an operation; and when the physician could not persuade him, I persuaded him, by no other art than rhetoric. I affirm, that, in any city you please, if a rhetorician and a physician were to contend, by discourse, in an assembly or meeting, as competitors for appointment to any office, the physician would be thought nothing of; the able speaker would be chosen, if he wished it: and if he became the rival of any other artist whatever, he would persuade them to choose him in preference to the other; for there is no subject on which a rhetorician would not speak more persuasively than any other person, to a multitude. Such and so great is the power of the art. It should, however, be used like any other power of subversion and overthrow. Such power ought not, because we possess it, to be therefore used against all persons indiscriminately. It does not follow, because a man has learnt to box, or to wrestle, or to fence, so as to be more than a match for friend or foe, that he should beat, and wound, and slay his friends: neither, if when, by gymnastic exercises, a man has acquired strength and skill, he beats his father, or his mother, or any of his relations or friends, ought we therefore to abhor and expel from the state the teachers of gymnastics and the fencing masters. They communicated the art, that it might be used justly, against the enemy and against wrongdoers, defensively, not for purposes of aggression; but their pupils pervert the faculty, and turn their strength and their art to an improper use. We are not, however, to impute this, and the criminality of it, to the art or to the teachers of the art, but to those who employ

it ill. The like is true with rhetoric. An orator is able to speak to all men and on any subject, so as to persuade the multitude; but he ought not to employ this faculty in depriving physicians or artificers of their reputation, merely because he has the power to do so: he should use rhetoric, like any other power, with justice: and if, having become a rhetorician, he employs his power and his art to do wrong, we should not abhor and banish the teacher, who gave the art for a good purpose, but him who employs it for a bad one."

Socrates thus replied: "I think, Gorgias, that you have had experience of many discussions, and must have perceived this, that men seldom know how jointly to examine and mark out the things about which they attempt to discuss; and having learnt and instructed themselves, so to break off the conversation. But if they dispute on any matter, and one of them charges the other with not speaking rightly, or not clearly, they are angry, and think that it is said in envy, and not in the pursuit of the proposed object of discourse; and they sometimes end by shamefully reproaching one another, and bandying such words as make the bystanders ashamed of themselves for having desired to listen to such men. Why do I say this? Because, what you now say, appears to me not very consistent with what you previously said concerning rhetoric. Now, I am afraid to confute you, lest you should suppose that I do it not from zeal to find the thing which we are in quest of, but in the spirit of contention against you. Now, if you are such a person as I am, I should like to go on interrogating you; if not, I will let it alone. And what sort of a man am I? One, who would gladly be refuted, if I affirm what is not true; and who would gladly refute, when another person does so; but who would just as gladly be refuted as refute; for I think it a greater good, by so much as it is a greater thing, to be ourselves relieved from the greatest of evils, than to relieve another person; and I conceive that there is no human evil so great as false opinion on the subject of which our present discourse treats. If, then, you are a person of the same sort, let us continue; but if you think we had better leave off, we will."

"I," said Gorgias, "profess to be such a person as you describe; but perhaps we should consider the wish of those who are present." They, however, unanimously begged that the argument might proceed; and Gorgias said it would be disgraceful for him,

especially after he had undertaken to answer all questions, not to be willing to continue.

"Hear, then," resumed Socrates, "something in your discourse which surprises me. You say that you can make any person, who receives your instructions, an orator, capable of persuading a multitude; not producing knowledge in their minds, but belief. You said that, on the subject of the healthful or unhealthful, an orator would be more capable of persuading than a physician." G.: "Certainly; in a multitude." S.: "In a multitude, in as much as to say, among those who do not know; for those who do know, will not be persuaded by him better than by a physician." G.: "Certainly." S.: "Then, if he is more persuasive than a physician, he is more persuasive than one who knows?" G.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "Not being himself a physician?" G.: "No." S.: "And, therefore, being ignorant of those things which the physician knows?" G.: "Yes." S.: "When, then, the orator is more persuasive than the physician, one who does not know is more persuasive among those who do not know, than one who does know?" G.: "This certainly follows." S.: "So it is, then, in all other arts. The orator and his art need not know how things really are; but they have invented a contrivance of persuasion, by which, among those who do not know, they appear to know more than those who do know." G.: "Is it not, then, a great privilege, not learning any other art, but only this one, to be nowise inferior to the artists themselves?"

"Whether," replied Socrates, "the orator is inferior or not inferior to other people, we shall examine by-and-bye. At present let me inquire this: Is the rhetorician situated in the same manner with respect to the just and unjust, the noble and disgraceful, the good and evil, as he is with respect to health, and the other subjects of the different arts; viz., himself, not knowing what is good or evil, just or unjust, but having a contrivance of persuasion, so as to appear, among those who do not know, to be more knowing than those who do? Or is it necessary that he should really know these things, and should have learnt them before he comes to learn rhetoric from you? And pray, will you, the teacher of rhetoric, if you find him ignorant of these things, not teach him, but only enable him, not knowing them, to seem to the vulgar to know them, and appear a good man without being so? Or, are you not able to teach him rhetoric at all, unless

he knows the real nature of these things beforehand? Or how is it? And pray unfold to me, as you just now said, the whole power of the art." G.: "I conceive that if he happened not to know these things, he would learn these likewise from me." S.: "If, then, you are to make any person a rhetorician, it is necessary that he should know the just and the unjust, either beforehand, or by your instructions?" G.: "Yes."

S.: "Now, is not he who has learnt architecture, an architect?" G.: "Yes." S.: "He who has learnt music, a musician?" G.: "Yes." S.: "He who has learnt medicine, a physician; and, to speak generally, he who has learnt anything, is that which the science he has learnt causes men to be." G.: "Certainly." S.: "Then, by this reasoning, he who has learnt justice is just." G.: "Certainly." S.: "Then a rhetorician must be just." G.: "Yes." S.: "But a just man acts justly." G.: "Yes." S.: "And a just man must necessarily wish to act justly?" G.: "So it seems." S.: "Then a just man will never wish to do injustice." G.: "No." S.: "But we said that a rhetorician must be just." G.: "Yes." S.: "Then a rhetorician will never wish to do injustice." G.: "It appears not."\* S.: "Do you remember now, that you said a short time ago, that as a gymnast ought not to be blamed nor expelled from the state if a boxer or wrestler makes an ill use of his art, so if an orator uses rhetoric for a bad purpose, we ought not to reproach or banish the teacher of rhetoric, but the person who perverts it to unjust purposes." G.: "I did." S.: "But now it seems that a rhetorician cannot be unjust." G.: "It seems so." S.: "And it was observed before, that the subject of rhetoric is discourse; not discourse on numbers, but discourse on the just and the unjust." G.: "Yes." S.: "When you said this, I imagined that rhetoric could not be an unjust thing, since all its discourse is of justice; but when you afterwards said that an orator might employ rhetoric unjustly, I wondered, and thinking the two

\* This, which appears a quibble rather than an argument, is not so according to Plato's ideas of the nature of virtue. We have seen in the Protagoras, which is continually apparent in the other works of Plato, and nowhere more clearly than in the subsequent part of this dialogue, viz., that he was inclined to the opinion that each of the virtues was a branch of intelligence, and that no one is vicious because he intends to be so, but merely from ignorance of virtue. Philosophical instruction in virtue was, therefore, in his view, the one thing needful for ensuring the practice of it. Under this idea it was no absurdity to say that he who has learnt justice, *ὁ τὰ δίκαια μεμαθήκως*, must be just; because injustice, according to this theory, was only a non-understanding of justice.



assertions inconsistent, I said, that if you, like myself, thought it a benefit to be refuted, it was worth while to continue the argument, but if not, it was better to leave it alone. And now, on further inquiry, we have admitted that a rhetorician cannot possibly use rhetoric unjustly, or wish to do injustice. To discover how this is, would require not a little conversation and discussion."

Here Polus breaks in; and, as we have seen in the preceding part of the dialogue how Socrates could conduct a respectful and well-bred disputation, we shall now see in what manner he could beat back an overweening and petulant assailant.

"What!" said Polus: "do you really think, on the subject of rhetoric, what you say? Do you not perceive that the advantage you have assumed over Gorgias is only owing to his shamefacedness, because he did not like to confess the truth? He was ashamed not to profess that a rhetorician knows what is really just, and good, and noble, and that he, Gorgias, if any one comes to him ignorant of these things, can teach them. In consequence of his admission, something like a contradiction, perhaps, arose in his discourse; the thing which always delights you. Who do you suppose would not, if asked, affirm that he knows what is just, and can teach it? But it is extremely unfair and ill-bred to drive any one into such a dilemma."

"Most excellent Polus," replied Socrates, "the great use of having friends or sons is, that when we grow old and fall into error, you younger men may set us right. If, therefore, Gorgias and I have made any mistake, do you correct it: and if any of our admissions appear to you improper, we will retract it, if you will only guard against one thing." P.: "What thing?" S.: "That lengthiness of discourse which you began with." P.: "What! Shall I not be allowed to say as much as I please?" S.: "You would be extremely ill used, my good friend, if coming to Athens, where there is greater freedom of speech than in any other city in Greece, you alone should not be suffered to participate in it. But consider this on the other hand: If you make long speeches, and do not choose to answer the question that is put to you, should not I also be very ill used if I were not allowed to go away and not listen to you? If you have a real regard for the discussion which has been commenced, and wish to rectify what was wrong in it, take back any of the concessions that have been made, and by questioning and answering, refute and be refuted; for you profess to know what Gorgias knows, do you not?" P.: "I

do." S.: "Then you also invite persons to put questions to you, and undertake to answer them?" P.: "Certainly." S.: "Then do which you please: interrogate, or answer."

P.: "So I will. Tell me, Socrates, since you think that Gorgias cannot tell what rhetoric is, pray what do *you* consider it to be?" S.: "Do you ask me what *art* I consider it to be?" P.: "I do." S.: "No art at all, to tell you the truth." P.: "What *thing*, then, do you call it?" S.: "A thing which you, in a book which I lately read, profess to erect into an art." P.: "And what is it?" S.: "A kind of *skill*." P.: "Rhetoric, then, according to you, is a kind of skill?" S.: "Yes, if you have no objection." P.: "Skill in what?" S.: "In gratification, and the production of pleasure." P.: "Is not rhetoric, then, a fine thing, since it is capable of causing gratification?" S.: "What, Polus! have I yet told you what I say it is, so that you should already ask me whether I do not think it a fine thing?" P.: "Did you not tell me that it was a kind of skill?" S.: "Since you set such a value on gratification, will you gratify me a little?" P.: "I will." S.: "Ask me, then, what art I consider cookery to be." P.: "I ask you, what art is cookery?" S.: "None at all." P.: "What is it then?" S.: "A kind of skill." P.: "Skill in what?" S.: "In gratification, and the production of pleasure." P.: "Are cookery and rhetoric, then, the same thing?" S.: "No; but they are branches of the same pursuit." P.: "What pursuit is that?" S.: "I am afraid it would be ill bred to say the truth: I do not like to say it, on Gorgias's account, lest he should think that I am satirising his profession. I do not know whether this is the rhetoric which Gorgias professes: for we could not make out clearly in the former discussion what he understands by it: but what I call rhetoric, is a branch of a thing which is not very admirable." "What thing?" asked Gorgias. "Speak; and do not have any reluctance on my account."

S.: "I think, Gorgias, that it is a pursuit, not governed by art, but belonging to a mind of great tact and boldness, and greatly fitted by nature for intercourse with men: and I call it, in one word, Adulation. Of this pursuit there are many other branches, and Cookery is one, which is thought to be an art, but, in my opinion, is no art, but a skill, and a routine. I call Rhetoric, and Cosmetics (the toilet), and the pursuit of the sophist, other species of the same pursuit. There are thus four branches

of it, conversant with four different things. If Polus wishes to question me further, let him do so; for I have told him that I consider rhetoric to be *a* branch of adulation, but not *what* branch; and he has overlooked that I have not yet answered his first question, though he goes on pressing me with a second, and asks me whether I think rhetoric a fine thing, before I have answered what it is. This is not fair, Polus; if you wish to know, ask me what branch of adulation I affirm rhetoric to be." P.: "I do ask; answer what branch it is?" S.: "Do you think you shall understand my answer? Rhetoric, in my view of the matter, is the counterfeit of a branch of politics." P.: "Well then, do you call it a noble or an ignoble thing?"\* S.: "An ignoble thing; for all bad things I call ignoble: since I must answer you as if you already understood what I have been saying." "By Jupiter!" said Gorgias, "neither do I myself understand what you mean." S.: "And no wonder, for I have not yet explained myself at all clearly; but Polus is young and sharp." "Leave him alone," resumed Gorgias, "and tell *me* how you consider rhetoric to be the counterfeit of a branch of politics."

"I will try," said Socrates, "to explain what rhetoric seems to me to be: and, if it be not so, Polus will refute me. There are such things as body and mind?" Gorgias answered, "There are." S.: "There is such a thing as a good habit of body, or of mind?" G.: "There is." S.: "And there is such a thing as an apparently good habit, which is not really so. Many persons seem to be in a good state of body, and no one but a physician or a gymnast could readily perceive that they are not so." G.: "True." S.: "There are things, moreover, which cause the body and the mind to be apparently in a good state, without really improving their condition at all." G.: "There are so."

S.: "Now, then, I can more clearly explain my meaning. These two things, body and mind, form the subjects of two arts. The art which relates to the mind, I call Politics, or the Social Art. The art which relates to the body, I cannot call by any single name; but the culture of the body, being itself one, has two

\* *καλὸν* and *αἰσχρὸν*. literally *beautiful* and *ugly*; but these words, although as justly applicable to moral as to physical objects, are not, in that application, sufficiently familiar to English ears. I have chosen the words which seemed to me most suitable to the objects of this dialogue. But no terms would answer the purpose exactly, unless, with the same original meaning, they continued the same habitual and familiar associations, as the Greek words.

branches, which are, gymnastics and medicine. Politics consists of the art of legislation, which corresponds to gymnastics, and the art of judicature, which corresponds to medicine. Gymnastics and Medicine, as they relate to the same subject, have some things in common with each other, as have likewise Judicature and Legislation; but they nevertheless have some differences. These, then are four arts, which serve the body and the mind, always having in view their greatest good. Adulation, perceiving this, I do not say knowing, but divining it, separates itself into four branches, and, decking itself in the garb of these four arts, pretends to be that which it counterfeits; not paying any regard to the greatest good, but baiting its hook with the greatest pleasure, so as to deceive the unreflecting, and appear the most valuable of all things. Cookery puts on the semblance of medicine, and pretends to know what kinds of food are best for the body; and if a physician and a cook had to appear before children, or before men who are as unthinking as children, that it might be decided which of them best understood good and bad diet, the physician would starve for want of employment. This I call adulation, and I hold it to be a disgraceful thing, Polus, because it aims at the pleasant only, without regarding the greatest good; and I affirm that it is not an art, but a mere skill, because it cannot give any account of the real nature of the things which it employs, not, consequently, can it explain the cause of the effects which it produces. I do not give the name of art to that which cannot render a reason for what it enjoins. If you doubt this, I am willing to contest it with you. Cookery, then, counterfeits medicine. In like manner, Cosmetics counterfeits Gymnastics, being a tricky, ignoble, and illiberal practice, which deceives by artificial colour and smoothness and figure and dress; and by giving fictitious beauty, produces neglect of our own natural beauty, which is the result of Gymnastics. Not to be lengthy, I will say to you in geometrical language, that, as Cookery is to Medicine, so is Cosmetics to Gymnastics; or, rather, as Cosmetics to Gymnastics, so is the pursuit of the sophist to the art of Legislation; and, as Cookery to Medicine, so is Rhetoric to the art of Judicature. These distinctions, at any rate, are real; although their pursuits, being nearly allied, are not unfrequently blended together, and it is not possible always to distinguish accurately which of them is practised by any particular individual.

“ Now, if the body were not governed by the mind, but governed

itself; if Cookery and Medicine were not surveyed and discriminated by the mind, but were to be judged by the body, taking its own gratification for the standard; no doubt the things which conduce to health, and those which conduce to the palate, the things which belong to Medicine, and those which belong to Cookery, would be all confounded together. You now therefore know what I assert Rhetoric to be: the counterpart of Cookery. Rhetoric is to the mind what Cookery is to the body.

"Perhaps, now, I have acted unaccountably, inasmuch as I would not let you make a long speech, and I have made one myself. But you ought to excuse me, for when I spoke concisely, you did not understand me, nor could make any use of my answer: you needed a long dissertation. If, then, you find that I cannot understand, or make use of your answers, do you also prolong your discourse; but, if I can, permit me to do so, for that is but just. And now, if you can make any thing of my present answer, do so."

"What!" asked Polus, "Do you affirm rhetoric to be Adulation?" S.: "I said, a branch of Adulation." P.: "Do good orators appear to you to be of mean account in a state, as being adulators?" S.: "Do you mean this as a question, or is it the beginning of a speech?" P.: "As a question." S.: "They do not seem to me to be of any account at all." P.: "How, of no account? Are they not the most powerful persons in a state?" S.: "Not if you mean that to be powerful is a good thing for the powerful person." P.: "But I do." S.: "Then orators appear to me to be less powerful in a state than any other persons whatever." P.: "What! Do they not, like despots, put to death whomsoever they desire, and deprive of his property and expel from the state whomsoever they think fit?" S.: "I am continually in doubt whether you are giving these things as your own opinion, or asking me for mine." P.: "I am asking you." S.: "Then you are asking me two questions at once." P.: "How so?" S.: "Did you not say, that orators, like despots, put to death whomsoever they *desire*, and deprive of his property and expel from the state whomsoever they *think fit*?" \* P.: "I did." S.: "These I call two questions; and I will answer both of them. I say that orators, and despots too, have

\* 'ὅς ἀν βούλωνται, whomsoever they desire, ὅς ἀν δακνῶσσι, whomsoever they think fit. The sequel will show that these two expressions mark, not inappropriately, the distinction which Plato had in view.

scarcely any power at all in a state, inasmuch as they accomplish scarcely any of the things which they *desire*; but they certainly effect what they *think fit*." P.: "But this surely is to be powerful." S.: "Not on your showing." P.: "Not on my showing? but it is on my showing." S.: "Not so indeed, since you said that to be powerful was a good thing for the powerful person." P.: "I say so still." S.: "Do you think it a good thing for a person to accomplish what he thinks fit, if he is without good sense? and is this what you call being powerful?" P.: "Not I." S.: "Then if you would refute him, you must show that orators have good sense, and that rhetoric is an art, not an adulation. But though you should leave me unrefuted, orators and despots who do whatever they think fit in a state, will be never the better for it. Power, you say, is something good. But to effect what we think fit, being without good sense, you yourself allow to be a bad thing." P.: "I do." S.: "How then can orators or despots be powerful in a state, unless you prove against me that they effect what they *desire*?" P.: "What a man!" S.: "I say, they do not effect what they desire." P.: "Did you not admit that they effect what they think fit?" S.: "I admit it still." P.: "Then they effect what they desire." S.: "I say not." P.: "Although they effect what they think fit?" S.: "Yes." P.: "You talk nonsense." S.: "Do not inveigh against me, most worthy Polus: but if you have any questions to put, show that I am wrong; if not, do you yourself answer." P.: "I am willing to answer, that I may know what it is you mean."

S.: "Does it seem to you that people, on each occasion, desire the thing itself which they do, or the thing for the sake of which they do it? For instance, does a person who takes medicine, desire the actual thing which he does, viz. to drink the potion and suffer pain, or the thing for the sake of which he does it, viz. to be in health? Evidently, to be in health. And navigators, or other men of business, do not desire the actual thing which they do (for who would desire all sorts of trouble and danger?) but they desire the thing for the sake of which all this is done, viz., to be rich?" P.: "Very true." S.: "And the case is the same with everything, is it not? When we do one thing for the sake of another, what we desire is not the thing which we do, but the thing for the sake of which we do it." P.: "Certainly." S.: "Now are not all things either good or bad, or between the two,

neither good nor bad?" P.: "Certainly." S.: "Wisdom, health, riches, and so forth, you call good, and their opposites bad." P.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "And the things which are neither good nor bad, are those which sometimes partake of good, sometimes of bad, sometimes of neither; as to sit, or to walk, or to run, or to sail, or as wood and stone, and so forth." P.: "True." S.: "Do we perform these indifferent things for the sake of the good things, or the good things for the sake of the indifferent things?" P.: "We perform the indifferent things for the sake of the good things." S.: "Then, when we walk, we do so in pursuit of good, and when we stand, it is for the same reason." P.: "Yes." S.: "And if we kill any one, or banish him, or confiscate his property, it is because we think it better to do so, than not." P.: "Certainly." S.: "Those then who do these things, do them for the sake of good." P.: "Granted." S.: "But we admitted that we desire, not those things which we perform for the sake of other things, but those other things, for the sake of which we perform them." P.: "Most true." S.: "Then we do not desire simply to kill men or banish them, or to deprive them of their property: but we desire to do these things if they be beneficial, and not to do them if they be hurtful. For, as you say, we desire the things which are good, but do not desire those which are indifferent, or bad. Do I say true? Why do you not answer?" P.: "It is true." S.: "Then, this being granted, if any one, being an orator, or a despot, kills another or takes any of his property or banishes him, thinking it to be a good thing for him to do so, when in reality it is a bad thing, this person does what he thinks fit?" P.: "Yes." S.: "But does he do what he desires, if these things are in reality bad? Why do you not answer?" P.: "It appears that he does not do what he desires." S.: "Can such a person then be said to be powerful in a state, if to be powerful be, as you say, a good thing?" P.: "He cannot." S.: "Then I said truly when I affirmed that it was possible to effect in a state whatever we think fit, and yet not to be powerful, nor effect what we desire."

P.: "So, then, Socrates, you would not like that it should be allowed you to accomplish in the state whatever seems fit to you, nor do you feel envy when you see a man killing, or imprisoning, or depriving of their property whomsoever he pleases."

"Do you mean," answered Socrates, "justly or unjustly?" P.: "In whichever way it is done, is it not enviable?" S.: "It

is not proper to envy the unenviable nor the miserable, but to pity them." P.: "What! do you think it is thus with the persons whom I describe?" S.: "Undoubtedly." P.: "Does he who kills whomsoever it seems best to him, and kills them justly, appear to you miserable and pitiable?" S.: "No, but neither does he appear enviable." P.: "Did you not, just now, call him miserable?" S.: "Him who kills unjustly, I called miserable, and pitiable too; him who kills justly, unenviable." P.: "Certainly he who is killed unjustly is pitiable and miserable." S.: "Less so than his slayer, and less so than he who is slain justly." P.: "How so?" S.: "Because to do injury is the greatest of evils." P.: "The greatest? Is it not a still greater evil to be injured?" S.: "By no means." P.: "Would *you* prefer to be injured, rather than do an injury?" S.: "I should not prefer either, but if one or the other were unavoidable, I should choose rather to be injured than to injure." P.: "Would you not consent to be a despot?" S.: "If by being a despot you mean what I mean, I should not." P.: "I mean, as I said before, being allowed to do in the state whatever we think fit; to kill, and banish, and do every thing according to our will." S.: "Most excellent person, listen to me. Suppose that I were to go out into the market-place when it is full, with a poniard under my arm, and to say to you, Polus, I have obtained a splendid despotism; for if it seem good to me that any one of all these men should die, he will die upon the spot; if I will that he should be wounded, he will be wounded; if that his cloak should be torn, it will be torn; so great is my power in this state. And suppose that, you being incredulous, I were to show you my poniard. You would probably answer, that by this account every body must be powerful, for in this way any one might set fire to any house, or to the docks, and all the vessels in the harbour, if he thought fit. But to be powerful does not consist in being able to do what we think fit." P.: "Not in this manner, certainly." S.: "Now can you tell what is your objection to this power?" P.: "Surely." S.: "What is it?" P.: "That a person who acts thus must inevitably be punished." S.: "And to be punished is an evil?" P.: "Certainly." S.: "Then it again appears to you, that to be powerful is good, only when, doing what we think fit, we do what is for our benefit, and this is what is meant by being powerful: without this, it is evil, and is not power but impotence.



“Let us consider further in this manner. It is sometimes better to do the thing which we were talking about, to kill, and confiscate, and banish; and sometimes not?” P.: “Undoubtedly.” S.: “This we are both of us agreed in?” P.: “We are.” S.: “In what cases do you say it is better, and in what otherwise? Tell me where you draw the line.” P.: “Do you, Socrates, answer this question yourself.” S.: “If you prefer to be a listener, I say, that when it is done justly it is better, and when unjustly, it is worse.” P.: “Could not a child refute what you now assert?” S.: “I shall be very thankful to the child, and equally so to you, if you refute me, and free me from error. Do not be tired of doing a service to a friend, but refute.” P.: “There is no occasion to go very far back in order to refute you. What happened only the other day is sufficient to prove that many unjust persons are happy.” S.: “What are these things?” P.: “Do you see Archelaus, the king of Macedonia?” S.: “If I do not see him I have heard of him.” P.: “Does *he* appear to you happy or miserable?” S.: “I do not know, for I have never conversed with the man.” P.: “What! could you know that he was happy by conversing with him, and not otherwise?” S.: “Certainly not.” P.: “Then you will say that you do not know whether the Great King (of Persia) is happy?” S.: “And I shall say truly; for I do not know in what condition he is with respect to mental cultivation and justice.” P.: “What! Does all happiness consist in this?” S.: “As I say, it does; for I affirm that an excellent man or woman is happy, an unjust and wicked one wretched.” P.: “Then Archelaus is wretched, by your account?” S.: “If he be unjust.” P.: “But how can it be denied that he is unjust?” And here Polus relates a series of crimes by which Archelaus had risen to the throne, intermixing much sarcastic irony on the notion of Socrates that he was unhappy, and ends by saying: “And do you suppose there is so much as a single Athenian, beginning with yourself, who would not rather be Archelaus than any other of the Macedonians?”

Socrates replied: “At the commencement of our conversation I praised you for being well versed in rhetoric, but said that you had neglected discussion. Is this the argument with which a child could confute me? Does this, in your opinion, refute my assertion that an unjust man is not happy? How, pray? for I do not admit a word of what you have said.” P.: “Because you will not; for you in reality think as I say.” S.: “My good

friend, you attempt to refute me rhetorically, in the manner of what is called refutation in the courts of justice. In those courts, one man thinks that he refutes another, if he can produce many witnesses of good reputation in behalf of what he says, while his adversary can produce only one, or none at all. But this sort of refutation is good for nothing as respects *truth*: for it sometimes happens that a great number of witnesses, and people who are thought to be of some worth, bear false witness. And now, on the subject of which you are speaking, very nearly all the Athenians, and foreigners too, will join in your assertion, and if you wish to produce witnesses in proof that I am wrong, you may have Nicias, if you please, and Aristocrates, and the whole family of Pericles, and, in short, any one you please in this city. But I, who am but one man, do not acknowledge it; for you do not compel me to do so, but attempt to bear me down and deprive me of my substance, of the Truth, by producing false witnesses against me. I, on the contrary, think I have done nothing, unless I can produce you, yourself, who are but one, as a witness on my side. Nor do I think that you have accomplished any thing, unless I, one single person, bear witness in your behalf, without regard to any of the others. Yours is one kind of refutation, as you and many others think; there is another kind, as I think. Let us compare them, and see whether they differ from one another. The things respecting which we are disputing are no trifling things, but are nearly those respecting which it is most honourable to know, and most disgraceful to be ignorant; for it is, in short to know or not to know, who is and who is not happy. You think, that a person who is unjust, and acts unjustly, may be happy?" P.: "I do." S.: "I say that it is not possible. This, then, is one point in dispute. Next, will a person who commits injustice be happy if he be brought to justice and punishment?" P.: "By no means; in that case he would be most wretched." S.: "But if he do not suffer punishment, he is happy?" P.: "Yes." S.: "In my opinion, he who is unjust and commits injustice, is in any case miserable; but more miserable if he be unjust and escape from punishment, than if he be brought to justice and suffer punishment. You have refuted my first opinion, have you not?" P.: "Yes." S.: "Will you refute the second, too?" P.: "That, truly, is still more difficult to refute than the first!" S.: "Not difficult, but impossible; for the truth cannot be refuted." P.: "How! If a man is

detected aiming unjustly at the tyranny, and being detected, is put to the rack and hewed in pieces, and has his eyes burnt out, and after suffering both in himself and in his wife and children the uttermost insult and contumely, is at last impaled or crucified, will he be more happy than if he succeeds in his enterprise, and attaining despotic power, continues master of the state to the end of his days, envied and felicitated both by his countrymen and by foreigners? Is this what you say it is impossible to refute?" S.: "You are inveighing now, and not refuting, as a little while ago you were calling witnesses. But pray refresh my memory; are you supposing him to aim *unjustly* at the tyranny?" P.: "Certainly." S.: "Then neither of them, neither he who is punished nor he who escapes, is the more happy; for of two miserable persons it cannot be said that either is the happier; but he who escapes and attains the tyranny, is the more wretched. What is this, Polus; do you laugh? Is this another mode of refutation, when any thing is asserted, to laugh, instead of answering it?" P.: "Do you not think yourself answered, when you say what no person in the world would say except yourself? Ask any of the bystanders."

Socrates replied: "I am no politician, and last year, when it fell to me by lot to be a member of the Council of Five Hundred, and when the turn came for my tribe to preside, and it was my duty to take the votes, I was laughed at for not knowing how to do it. Do not, therefore, bid me take the votes of the bystanders; but if you cannot produce a better refutation of what I asserted than this, let me take my turn, and try to show you what I consider to be a refutation; for I know how to produce one witness in proof of my assertion, viz., the person with whom I am speaking; but the large number I let alone I know how to take the vote of one person, but with the many I do not converse. Let us see, therefore, whether you are willing, in your turn, to submit yourself to refutation, by answering the questions which are asked of you. For my opinion is, that both you and I, and all men, consider it a greater evil to do an injury than to suffer one, and to be unpunished than to be punished." P.: "And I say that neither I nor any other person is of that opinion. Would you yourself rather be injured than injure?" S.: "And you, too, and every one." P.: "No such thing." S.: "Then will you answer?" P.: "Yes; for I greatly desire to hear what you will find to say."

S.: "Suffer me then to interrogate you, beginning from the very commencement. Do you think it a greater evil to be injured, or to injure?" P.: "To be injured." S.: "Which do you think the more ignoble, to be injured or to injure? answer me." P.: "To injure." S.: "Then if it be more ignoble, it is more evil." P.: "By no means." S.: "I understand: you do not, it seems, consider Noble and Good, Ignoble and Evil, to be the same things?" P.: "Certainly not."

S.: "Listen then. When you call any thing noble, as a noble countenance, or air, or figure, or voice, or conduct; what is it that you look to in calling them noble? Do you not, for instance, affirm of a man, that he has a noble person, either on account of some use, to which his person is subservient, or of some pleasure which it produces to those who see it? Can you assign any other reason?" P.: "I cannot." S.: "And are not all noble voices, and persons, and so forth, called so, either on account of some pleasure, or some utility, or both?" P.: "Yes." S.: "And what is noble in conduct and action, is called noble on no other account, but either because it is useful, or agreeable, or both" P.: "So it appears to me. And you define the noble well, when you define it by the Pleasant and the Good." S.: "Then the ignoble must be defined by the contraries of these, Pain and Evil." S.: "Of necessity." S.: "When, therefore, of two noble things, one is the nobler, it is so because it excels the other in pleasantness, or usefulness, or in both." P.: "Certainly." S.: "And when, of two ignoble things, the one is more ignoble than the other, it is so, by exceeding it either in pain, in evil, or in both." P.: "Yes."

S.: "Let us now call to mind what was said respecting Injuring and Being Injured. Did you not say, that to be injured was more evil, but to injure, more ignoble?" P.: "I did." S.: "Then, if to injure be more ignoble than to be injured, it must either be more painful, or more evil, or both." P.: "No doubt." S.: "Let us then consider, in the first place—Is to injure, more painful than to be injured? Does the person who does an injury suffer more pain than he who undergoes it?" P.: "Certainly not." S.: "It does not then exceed in painfulness." P.: "No." S.: "If not in painfulness, certainly not in both." P.: "So it seems." S.: "Then it must exceed in evil." P.: "It appears so." S.: "Then to injure is more evil than to be injured." P.: "It is evident." S.: "It was admitted some time ago by you, in

behalf of yourself, and of mankind in general, that to injure is more ignoble than to be injured?" P.: "Yes." S.: "And now it has appeared to be more evil." P.: "It has." S.: "Would you then prefer that which is more ignoble and more evil, to that which is less so? Do not fear to answer, for you will receive no hurt, but nobly give yourself up to the argument as to a physician, and either admit or deny my proposition." P.: "I would not prefer it." S.: "Would any one?" P.: "According to this argument it would appear not." S.: "I spoke truth, then, when I said that neither you, nor I, nor any one, would choose rather to do than to suffer an injury; for it is a greater evil." P.: "It seems so." S.: "You see, then, the difference between this mode of refutation and the other. You had the suffrages of all the world, except me; but I am contented with the suffrage and testimony of you alone, and, having taken your vote, I have nothing to say to the others. So much for this. Let us now consider the other question, Whether to commit injustice, and be punished, is, as you thought, the greatest of evils, or, as I thought, a less evil than impunity. To commit injustice, and be punished, is the same thing as to be punished justly, is it not?" P.: "It is." S.: "Can it be denied, that whatever is just is noble, in so far as it is just? Consider and say." P.: "It seems to me that it is so." S.: "And consider this likewise: if any thing *acts*, is it not necessary that there should be something which is *acted upon*?" P.: "Certainly." S.: "And is not the one *acted upon* in the same manner in which the other acts? For example, if you *strike*, there must be something which is *struck*?" P.: "Yes." S.: "And if you strike hard, the thing which is struck is struck hard." P.: "Certainly." S.: "Then that which is acted upon, is affected in the same manner in which the thing which acts affects. Whatever the agent acts, the patient suffers the same." P.: "I admit it." S.: "Now, whether is to suffer punishment, a mode of acting, or of being acted upon?" P.: "Of being acted upon." S.: "Of being acted upon, then, by some agent?" P.: "Certainly, by the punisher." S.: "But he who punishes rightly, punishes justly." P.: "Yes." S.: "Then he acts justly." P.: "Certainly." S.: "Then he who is punished, is punished justly. But what is just, we have agreed is noble." P.: "We have." S.: "Then the agent who punishes does what is noble, and the patient who is punished suffers what is noble." P.: "Yes." S.: "But, if he suffers what is noble,

he suffers what is good, for noble must mean either pleasant or useful." P.: "Of necessity." S.: "Then he who suffers punishment, suffers what is good." P.: "So it seems." S.: "Then he is benefited." P.: "Yes." S.: "In what way? I suppose by becoming in a better state of mind, if he is punished justly." P.: "It is probable." S.: "Then he who suffers punishment gets rid of the vice of the mind." P.: "Yes." S.: "Does he not then get rid of the greatest of all evils? Let us look at it thus: Is there any possible vice or badness in our pecuniary condition, except poverty?" P.: "None." S.: "In our bodily condition is there any possible defect, except weakness, and disease, and deformity, and so forth?" P.: "None." S.: "Is there not also a vicious state of the mind?" P.: "There is." S.: "And does not this consist of injustice, and ignorance, and cowardice, and so forth?" P.: "Yes." S.: "Then you have enumerated the three characteristic vices of the estate, the body and the mind; and these are, poverty, disease, and injustice?" P.: "Yes." S.: "And which of these vices is the most ignoble? Is it not injustice, and, generally speaking, the vice of the mind?" P.: "By far." S.: "And if it is the most ignoble, it is the worst?" P.: "How so?" S.: "The most ignoble is either the most painful, the most detrimental, or both; as results from our previous admissions." P.: "Certainly." S.: "But injustice, and, generally, the vice of the mind, have been granted by us to be the most ignoble of all kinds of vice?" P.: "Yes." S.: "Then it must be either the most painful, or the most pernicious, or both." P.: "It must." S.: "Now, is injustice, or intemperance, or cowardice, or ignorance, more excruciating than poverty or sickness?" P.: "I apprehend not." S.: "Then the vice of the mind must surpass the vices of the body and of the estate, to an extraordinary degree in mischievousness, since it does not surpass them in painfulness." P.: "So it seems." S.: "But that which surpasses all things in mischievousness must be the greatest of evils." P.: "Yes." S.: "Then injustice, and intemperance, and, in a word, the vice of the mind, is the greatest of evils." P.: "So it appears."

S.: "What art is it which cures us of poverty? Is it not that of the man of business?" P.: "It is." S.: "And what cures us of disease? Is it not medicine?" P.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "And what cures us of wickedness and injustice? If this be not immediately obvious, let us look at it in another way. To

whom do we hand over those whose bodies are disordered?" P.: "To the physician." S.: "And to whom do we hand over those who are unjust and lawless?" P.: "You mean, to the magistrate." S.: "In order to suffer punishment?" P.: "Yes." S.: "And those who punish rightly, do so by the exercise of justice." P.: "They do." S.: "The art of the man of business, then, rids us of poverty, medicine rids us of disease, legal justice rids us of injustice and intemperance?" P.: "So it seems." S.: "Which of these three, then, is the most noble?" P.: "Justice, by far." S.: "Then it either produces the greatest pleasure, or the greatest benefit, or both?" P.: "Yes." S.: "Is it a pleasant thing to be under the hands of the physician?" P.: "No." S.: "But it is useful?" P.: "Yes." S.: "For it cures us of a great evil; so that it is for our good to suffer the pain, and receive health" P.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "But whether is most happy he who undergoes medical treatment, or he who has not been ill at all?" P.: "Certainly the latter. For happiness is not to get rid of an evil, but never to have had it." S.: "But of two persons who have a malady, either of the body or of the mind, which is the most miserable, he who undergoes medical treatment and is cured, or he who undergoes no medical treatment and continues ill?" P.: "The last is the most miserable." S.: "But to suffer punishment was, we admitted, to be freed from the worst of evils, viz., wickedness." P.: "It was." S.: "For punishment chastens men, and makes them more just, and is a kind of medicine for the vice of the mind." P.: "Yes." S.: "He then is happiest who has not the vice of the mind: the next happiest is he who is cured of it, viz., he who is reproved, and undergoes punishment. He who is afflicted with injustice, and is not cured, has the worst life of all; and that is, he who commits the greatest crimes, with the greatest success, and escapes all reproof, and all punishment; as you say is the case with Archelaus, and other despots and orators." P.: "So it appears." S.: "For their case is like that of a person afflicted with the worst diseases, who should so manage as never to be punished by physicians for the vicious state of his body, by undergoing medical treatment; being afraid, like a child, of cutting and burning, because it is painful. Do you not think so?" P.: "I do." S.: "And being ignorant, it would seem, of the value of health, and the excellence which belongs to the body, those who fly from punishment appear, from our admissions, to be in a

similar situation: they see the painfulness of it, but are blind to the utility, and know not how much more wretched it is to be afflicted with an unsound mind, than with an unsound body. They therefore use all means which may aid them in escaping from punishment and from cure, by collecting money, and obtaining friends, and acquiring the power of persuasion. But if our admissions were correct, do you see what follows, or shall we state it particularly?" P.: "If you have no objection." S.: "Is not injustice and doing injury the greatest of evils, punishment the cure of it, impunity the permanence of it, to be unjust and be punished the greatest of all evils, except one, to be unjust with impunity the greatest of all?" P.: "So it appears." S.: "If this be the case, what, then, is the great use of rhetoric? It appears from our admissions, that it is most of all incumbent upon every one to guard himself against the evil of injustice." P.: "Certainly." S.: "But if he or any one in whom he takes interest, should commit injustice, he ought voluntarily to court a speedy punishment, and go to the magistrate, as he would to the physician, as fast as he can, in order that the disease may not become inveterate by age, and taint his constitution, and be incurable. Does not this necessarily follow from our former admissions?" P.: "What else can we say?" S.: "Rhetoric, then, is of no use to us for defending our own injustice, or that of our friends, or our country. We ought, on the contrary, to accuse ourselves in the first instance, and next our relatives and our friends, and not to conceal our transgressions, but bring them to light, that we may suffer punishment, and be restored to health; not caring for the pain, but, if we have merited stripes, giving ourselves up to the stripe; if imprisonment, to the prison; if death, to death; and employing rhetoric for the accusation of ourselves, and of those who are dear to us, that their guilt may be made manifest, and they may be freed from the greatest of evils, that of injustice. Is it not so?" P.: "It appears to me extremely paradoxical, but, from our previous admissions, it cannot perhaps be escaped from." S.: "Then we must either refute our admissions, or grant these conclusions." P.: "Yes." "On the other hand" (continued Socrates), "if we wish to do evil to any one, to an enemy for instance, we ought indeed to avoid being ourselves injured by him; but, if he injure any other person, we ought to exert ourselves in every manner, by word and deed, to save him from being brought to justice; and, if he be indicted,



we should contrive that he may escape, and not suffer punishment; but, if he has possessed himself wrongfully of much wealth, may not be compelled to refund it, but may expend it on himself and his connexions unjustly and impiously; and, if he has committed crimes worthy of death, that he may not die: if possible, never, but may be immortal in his wickedness; but, if not, that he may live as long in it as he can. For such purposes rhetoric may be of use; but, for one who is not to commit injustice, I cannot see that it can be of any great utility."

In the discussion, first with Gorgias, and afterwards with Polus, Socrates had remained the victor, and had forced the latter most reluctantly to acknowledge that to do injustice is a greater evil than to suffer it, and that to do injustice and escape unpunished is a greater evil than to suffer punishment: and Polus seems to have been effectually reduced to silence, for he takes no further part in this dialogue. But Socrates has still to encounter a more daring and less scrupulous antagonist than either of the two former.

Callicles, the host of Gorgias, at whose house the dispute was carried on, could now no longer contain himself. "Tell me," said he (addressing Chaerephon), "is Socrates in earnest, or in jest?" "He appears to me," answered Chaerephon, "to be remarkably in earnest: but there is nothing like asking himself." "By the gods," resumed Callicles, "I have a mind to do so. Tell me, Socrates, are we to consider you as serious, or in jest? for if you are serious, and if what you now say is true, all human life is at present topsy-turvy, and we are all doing the very contrary of what we ought."

"If, O Callicles," answered Socrates, "men did not resemble one another in their modes of being affected; if one of us had an affection peculiar to himself, he could not very easily make another man comprehend it. I say this, because you and I are affected in the very same manner, being both of us in love, but with different objects; myself with Philosophy, you with the Athenian people. And I perceive that you, clever as you are, never know how to contradict any thing which your mistress affirms, but change backwards and forwards along with its changes. If you say any thing in the assembly, and the Athenian people say otherwise, you give it up, and say what the people desire; for you are unable to resist the will and the words of your

mistress. So that if, when you say any of the things which you say for your love's sake, any person should be surprised at the strangeness of them, you would say to him, if you had a mind to speak the truth, that unless somebody will stop your mistress from saying these things, he will never be able to stop you. Imagine, then, that I am in the same situation with yourself, and do not be surprised that I say these things, but stop my mistress, Philosophy, from saying them: for she still continues to say the things which you are now wondering at; and you yourself were present when they were said. Either, then, confute her, by proving, that to be unjust, and being so, to escape punishment, is not, as I affirm, the worst of evils; or if you leave this unrefuted, Callicles will never agree with you, O Callicles, but will be in contradiction to you all your life. I should think it better that my lyre should be discordant, or that the choral dance led by me should be out of time, or that all mankind should be out of harmony with me, rather than I myself should be out of tune, and not consonant with myself."

Callicles replied: "You are a true haranguer, and you have now made this triumphant harangue, merely because Polus has done what he himself charged Gorgias with doing. When you asked Gorgias whether, if a person who wished to learn rhetoric, came to him ignorant of justice, he would teach it to him, Gorgias said Yes, because he was ashamed to say No, on account of the custom of men, because they would be indignant if he said that he would not; and Polus remarked this, and said, that this admonition was what forced Gorgias to contradict himself, and that this is what delights you: and he ridiculed you, at that time, as I thought, very justly. But now the same thing has happened to himself. What I do not admire in Polus is, that he admitted that to injure is more ignoble than to be injured. It was by this admission that he was entangled, and had his mouth shut up, being ashamed to say what he thought. For you, pretending to pursue truth, always drive the argument to an invidious appeal to common prejudices, making it turn upon the things which are not noble by nature, but only by institution. These two things, nature and institution, are, for the most part, contrary to one another: and if a man is ashamed, and does not dare to say what he thinks, he is forced to contradict himself. But the wise invention which enables you to force him to contradict himself is a mere quibble: when a man is speaking of institution, you inter-

pret it of nature, and when of nature, you interpret it of institution. For instance, on this subject of injuring and being injured, Polus spoke of what was more ignoble by institution, and you met him with what was more ignoble by nature. By nature, to be injured is not only worse, but also more ignoble, than to injure: by institution only is it more ignoble to injure. To be injured is not the attribute of a man, but of a slave, fitter to die than to live, who, if he is wronged or insulted, is not capable of protecting himself nor those whom he cares for. But the makers of institutions are the Many, and the weak. They make their laws, and dispense their praise and blame, with a view to themselves, and to their own advantage. Fearing lest the more energetic, who are capable of attaining superiority, should attain it over them, they call it base and unjust to take more than other people, and even affirm that this is precisely what constitutes injustice. For they, being the feebler, are contented with equality. By institution, therefore, to aim at superiority is unjust and ignoble, and is termed, to do injury. But Nature herself shows that it is just for the better to take more than the worse, and the stronger than the weaker. She shows, in the other animals, and in whole nations and races of men, that, for the stronger to govern the weaker, and to take the larger share, is true justice. With what justice did Xerxes make war on Greece, or his father, Darius, on the Scythians? They did what was just by nature, and by the laws of nature, not by those which we devise, catching the best and strongest among us, like lions, when they are young, and enslaving them by fictions and old songs, telling them that nobleness and justice consist in equality. But if a man arises, adequately endowed by nature, he breaks through, and shakes off these fetters, and, trampling upon our statutes and our charmed words, and all institutions contrary to nature, rises up our master, no longer our slave, and the justice of nature shines forth in him. Pindar indicates thus, in the ode in which he says that Hercules took away the oxen of Geryon, neither buying them nor receiving them by gift; this being natural justice, and all the possessions of the worse and the weaker, belonging of right to the better and the stronger. This is true; and you will know it, if you abandon philosophy, and apply yourself to greater pursuits. Philosophy is a graceful thing, when it is moderately cultivated, in youth; but if any one occupies himself with it beyond the proper age, it ruins him. For, however great may be his natural capacity, if he

philosophises too long, he must of necessity continue inexperienced in all those things which one who would be a great and eminent man ought to be experienced in. He must be unacquainted with the laws of his country, and with the mode of influencing other men in the intercourse of life, whether private or public, and with the pleasures and passions of men; in short, with human character and manners. And when such men are called upon to act, whether on a public or private occasion, they expose themselves to ridicule, just as politicians do when they come to your conversations, and attempt to cope with you in argument. For every man, as Euripides says, occupies himself with that in which he finds himself superior; that in which he is inferior he avoids, and speaks ill of it, but praises what he excels in, thinking that in doing so he is praising himself. The best thing, in my opinion, is to partake of both. It is good to partake of philosophy, by way of education, and it is not disgraceful in a young man to philosophise. But if he continues to do so when he grows older, he becomes ridiculous, and I feel towards him as I should towards a grown person who lisped, and played at childish plays. When a child does so, in whom it is becoming, I am pleased, and it appears to me graceful, and suitable to his age; and if I hear a child speaking plain, like a grown person, it is disagreeable to me, and has a servile appearance. But if I hear a grown person lisp, or see him at play, I think it unmanly and contemptible. So I think of those who philosophise. When I see a young man philosophising, I think it commendable and becoming, and consider him as of a liberal mind, and hold that he who does not philosophise at that age, is vulgar-minded, and will never feel himself capable of any thing noble and exalted. But when I see an old man still continuing to philosophise, I think he deserves to be flogged. However great his natural talents, he is under the necessity of avoiding the assembly and public places, where, as the poet says, men become eminent, and to hide himself, and pass his life whispering to two or three striplings in a corner, but never speaking out any thing great and bold and liberal. I, Socrates, feel towards you as your friend, and am inclined to say to you what Zethus says to Amphion in Euripides, that you neglect what you ought to attend to, and waste a mind by nature so powerful, in trifling and child's play. Do not be angry, for I speak solely from good will towards you. Does it not seem to you a disgraceful thing to be as you are, and

as those others are who make philosophy their occupation? If any one should charge you with some crime, which you had not committed, and carry you off to prison, you would gape and stare, and would not know what to say; and when brought to trial, however contemptible and weak your accuser might be, if he chose to indict you capitally, you would perish. Can this be wisdom, which, if it takes hold of a gifted man, destroys the excellence of his nature, rendering him incapable of preserving himself or others from the greatest dangers, enabling his enemies to plunder him of all his property, and reducing him to the situation of those who, by the sentence of a court of justice, have been deprived of their civil rights? so that (though it may sound harshly) a man might even strike him a blow with impunity. Be persuaded by me: give up confutation, leave these clevernesses to others, and do not emulate those who gain these petty victories, but those who have wealth and reputation, and the other blessings of life."

Socrates replied: "If my soul were golden, do you not think that I should be glad to discover one of those touchstones with which they try the purity of gold, that I might try my soul by it, and if it stood the test, I might know that I am as I should be, and need no further test?" C.: "Why do you ask this question?" S.: "Because I think that I have found such a treasure in you." C.: "How?" S.: "I know that whatever of my opinions you give your assent to, must be true. He who is capable of serving as a touchstone on the subject of right and wrong modes of life, must have three qualities, all of which you possess: knowledge, good will, and frankness. I meet with many persons who are not capable of bringing me to the test, because they are not as wise as you are. Others are wise, but are not willing to speak the truth to me, because they do not care for me as you do. Our friends Gorgias and Polus are wise, and well disposed toward me, but deficient in frankness, and more shamefaced than they should be. For how can they be otherwise, they who are so much ashamed, that they are driven by shame to contradict themselves before a numerous company, and on the most important subjects. But you possess all the qualities which others are destitute of. You are adequately instructed, as many of the Athenians would aver. You are well-disposed towards me; and how do I know this? Because I am aware that you and three others, Tisander, Andron, and Nausicydes, carry on your studies

in common, and I have heard you discussing together, how far wisdom ought to be pursued; and I know that the opinion which prevailed among you, was, that you should not be too eager to philosophise accurately, and should be on your guard not to be spoilt by becoming more wise than is advisable. When therefore I find you giving me the same advice which you give to your most intimate friends, it is a sufficient proof of your good will towards me. Again, that you are capable of speaking out, boldly and without shame, you yourself say, and the speech you just now made is a proof of it. I am therefore satisfied that if you are brought to agree with me in any thing which I say, it is sufficiently tried, and does not need any further test. For you would not admit it either from deficiency of wisdom, or excess of shame; nor would you concede it with the intent to deceive me; for you are, as you yourself say, my friend. Our agreement, therefore, will be the final establishment of truth. This inquiry, in the course of which I have incurred your animadversions, the inquiry what a human being should be, and with what he should occupy himself in youth and in age, is the noblest of all inquiries. If I, in the regulation of my life, do any thing which I should not do, be assured that I do not err intentionally, but from ignorance. Do not then relax in your admonitions, but persevere, and show me what it is which I ought to practise, and in what manner I may best attain to the practice of it. And if you find me now admitting what you say, but subsequently not acting conformably to what I have admitted, think me spiritless and worthless, and never take the trouble to correct me again.

“Repeat to me, then, from the beginning, what you affirmed to constitute the Justice which is not merely of institution, but of nature. You said, if I remember right, that Natural Justice is, for the better to command the worse, and the more excellent to take more than the more worthless. Said you not so?” C.: “I did, and do.” S.: “Do you consider the better, and the stronger, to be synonymous? You appeared to indicate something of this sort when you said that great states attack small ones by the justice of nature, because they are the stronger. Is it possible, then, to be the better, but at the same time the weaker; or the stronger, but at the same time the worse? Or, the stronger, and the better, equivalent expressions?” C.: “They are equivalent.” S.: “And are not many by nature stronger than one? You yourself said that the many give laws to the one.”

C.: "Certainly" S.: "Then the institutions of the many are those of the stronger." C.: "Yes." S.: "And therefore, by your account, of the better." C.: "Certainly." S.: "Then the institutions of the many are by nature noble, since the many are the stronger." C.: "Granted." S.: "Now, do not the many think, as you before observed, that Equality is just, and that it is more ignoble to injure than to be injured? Do not you, too, suffer yourself to be entrapped by shamefacedness. Do not the many think that justice consists in equality, and not in superiority? and that to injure is more ignoble than to be injured? Do not deny me an answer, in order that, if you agree with me, I may consider my opinion established by the admission of a competent judge." C.: "The many are of this opinion." S.: "To injure, then, is more ignoble than to be injured, not by institution only, but likewise by nature: and you were wrong when you accused me, saying that Institution and Nature are contrary to one another, and that I, knowing this, quibble in argument, interpreting of Institution that which is affirmed of Nature, and of Nature what is affirmed of Institution."

C.: "This man will never have done trifling. Are you not ashamed, Socrates, at your age, to cavil at words, and triumph if any one makes a mistake in a name? Did I not tell you expressly that by the stronger I meant the better? Do you think I meant that if a crowd be collected, of slaves and all kind of persons having no good quality except perhaps physical force, that whatever they affirm should be right?" S.: "This then is your meaning?" C.: "It is." S.: "I conjectured before that this was what you meant, and I only question you in order to understand you more clearly. For I do not suppose that you consider two to be better than one, or your slaves better than yourself because they are stronger. But pray begin again at the beginning, and tell me whom you mean by the better, since you do not mean the stronger. And let me intreat you to instruct me in a milder manner, lest I should withdraw from your tuition." S.: "You are pleased to be sarcastic" S.: "I swear by Zethus, in whose name you were so sarcastic upon me, that I am not. But pray tell me whom you mean by the better." C.: "The worthier." S.: "Do you not perceive that you yourself are merely paying us in words, and telling us nothing? Will you not say whether by the better and the stronger, you understand the more intelligent?" C.: "Yes, surely." S.: "Then one intelligent person

is superior to a thousand who are not intelligent, and ought to rule over them, and to have a larger share than they? Tell me (and I am not cavilling at words) whether this is your meaning?" C.: "It is. And this is what I call natural justice; that the better and more intelligent should govern the worse, and be preferred to them."

S.: "Pray explain yourself further. If there were many of us assembled together, possessing in common a great supply of food and drink; and if we were people of all descriptions, some of us strong and others weak, but one of us, being a physician, was more intelligent than the rest on the subject of diet; would not he be better and superior, as compared with the rest of us, so far as these things were concerned?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "Ought he, then, as being the better, to have a larger share of food than the rest? or ought he to be intrusted, indeed, with the distribution, but not permitted to take a greater quantity for his own use than any other, on pain of punishment?" C.: "You talk of food, and drink, and physicians, and such stuff, but that is not what I mean." S.: "Do you not say that the more intelligent are the better?" C.: "I do." S.: "And that the better ought to have the larger share?" C.: "Not of food or drink." S.: "I understand: of clothing, perhaps. The man who understands most of weaving, ought to have the largest coats and the finest, and to walk about with the greatest number of them on his body." C.: "Why will you talk about coats?" S.: "It is of shoes then, that the person who is most intelligent respecting them, ought to have the largest share. The shoemaker should wear the largest shoes, and the greatest number of them at once." C.: "What stuff is this about shoes!" S.: "Or, perhaps, you mean that he who is intelligent and skillful in agriculture, ought to have the largest quantity of seed, and to employ most of it on his own land." C.: "You always say the same thing." S.: "On the same subject, I always do." C.: "You will not cease speaking of tanners and fullers and cooks and physicians, as if that were what we are talking about." S.: "Will you not tell me, then, what is the subject in which those who are most intelligent are justly entitled to superiority? Will you neither tell me, nor suffer me to guess?" C.: "I have told you long ago. Those whom I call the superior and the better, are not shoemakers, nor cooks, but those who are intelligent in the affairs of the state, and in the proper mode of administering it; and not only intelligent but



courageous, capable of accomplishing what they devise, and not faltering by effeminacy of soul."

S.: "Your complaint of me, and mine of you, are very different. You blame me for always saying the same thing; I, on the contrary, blame you, for never saying the same thing on the same subject. You first defined the better to be the *stronger*; then the more *intelligent*; and now you say that they are the more *courageous*. Pray tell me, once for all, who they are." C.: "I have told you, that they are the more intelligent in public affairs, and the more courageous. These are the persons who are entitled to govern the state; and it is just that these should have a larger share than the rest, since they command, and the others are commanded." S.: "Do you imply that they should command themselves as well as others? Or is it not necessary for any one to command himself, but only other people?" C.: "What do you mean by commanding himself?" S.: "Only what the vulgar mean, to be intemperate and sober, governing his own pleasures and desires." C.: "How pleasant you are! You describe a simpleton, and call him a sober person. How can a person be happy if he is a slave to any thing? I freely tell you, that what is noble and just by nature, is that he who would live well, should allow his desires to attain the greatest possible strength, and never restrain them; and should be capable, by his courage and talents, of ministering to his desires, and satisfying them, however great they may be. But of this the many are incapable; and therefore do they censure such conduct, to hide their own impotence; and pretend that self-indulgence is a vile thing; and because they are not capable of ministering to their own appetites, they praise temperance and justice from mere unmanliness. For, in reality, to those who are born to a throne, or who are capable, by their natural endowments, of raising themselves to despotic power, what can be more ignoble or more contemptible than self-control? Should those who have the means of enjoying every pleasure without hindrance from anybody, erect the law of the many, and *their* praise and blame, into a master over themselves? They would be well off in good truth, by your nobleness, and your justice, and your self-restraint, if they were prevented by it from giving any preference to their friends over their enemies, although possessing absolute power in the state. The truth (which you say is your object) is, that luxury and self-indulgence, if our means be adequate, are real

virtue and happiness: and all other virtue and happiness are mere pretence, and human devices, and conventions contrary to nature."

"You keep your promise," replied Socrates, "to be frank with me; for you plainly speak out, what other people think, but do not like to say. I beg you not to relax, until it is clearly established, according to what rule we ought to live. You say that we ought not to restrain our desires, but allowing them to be as violent as possible, we should provide the means of their gratification; and that this is virtue." C.: "I do." S.: "The common saying then, that those are happy who want nothing, is incorrect." C.: "Stones, and the dead, would by this account be the happiest." S.: "But even on your theory, life is a troublesome thing. Some poet of old compared the soul to a pitcher and that of a fool to a pitcher which leaks at the bottom, and is unable to hold anything: implying that a contented and contented life is preferable to an insatiable and self-indulgent one. But I suppose you are not very likely to be convinced by an old song." C.: "Your last observation has more truth in it." S.: "I will give you another illustration from the same source. Let us typify the life of the temperate and that of the self-indulgent, by the image of two persons, each of whom has a large number of pitchers. The one has them all sound, and filled with honey, and wine, and milk, and many other things: the streams which supply these different liquids being scanty, and the supply being obtainable only by prodigious labour. The one, having filled his pitchers, has no more trouble, nor any occasion to turn any further streams into his cellar. The other has it in his power, like the first, to obtain the supply, though with great difficulty; but his vessels are leaky and unsound, and he is obliged to employ night and day in filling them, or suffer the most dreadful torture. Such being the lives of the temperate and the intemperate man, do I convince you that the former is more eligible than the latter?" C.: "You do not convince me. For the first man, when he has filled his pitchers, has no longer any pleasure, but lives, as I said before, like a stone, inanimate, with neither pleasure nor pain. Pleasure consists in having as great a stream as possible always pouring in." S.: "Then if much is poured in, much must run out, and the leaks must be very large?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "This is not the life of a dead man or a stone, but it is the life of a funnel." \*

\* Properly of a *χαραδριος*, an unknown bird, of a remarkably rapid digestion.

S.: "You say, it is happiness to be hungry, and, being hungry, to eat." C.: "Yes." S.: "To be thirsty, and, being thirsty, to drink." S.: "Yes, and to have all other appetites, and to be able to satisfy them" S.: "I commend you, for you go on as you have begun. Do not be ashamed. Neither ought I, apparently, to be shamefaced. And first tell me, whether to itch constantly, and having the means of scratching, to pass our whole lives in that operation, would be to live happily?" C.: "How unfair you are, and how fond of appealing to the vulgar." S.: "And therefore did I embarrass Polus and Gorgias, and make them ashamed; but be not you ashamed, who are a bold man, but answer me." C.: "I answer then, that the scratcher would live agreeably" S.: "But if agreeably, then happily." C.: "Certainly." S.: "See what you will have to answer, if you are pressed with all the questions which would naturally follow these. Is not the life of a catamite vile and miserable? Or will you venture to say, that he too is happy, if all his wants are plentifully supplied?" C.: "Are you not ashamed to lead the argument to such things?" S.: "Is it I who lead it thither, or you, who affirm sweepingly that all who enjoy themselves, no matter how, are happy; and make no distinction between good pleasures and bad ones? Tell me again, whether Pleasant and Good are the same, or whether there is any thing pleasant which is not good?" C.: "That my discourse may not be inconsistent with itself if I say they are different, I will say that they are the same." S.: "You destroy the whole argument, and are no longer fitted for inquiring into truth, if you speak differently from what you think." C.: "It is what you yourself do." S.: "If I do so, I do wrong, and so do you. But consider whether it be not true, that Good is not synonymous with Enjoyment, of whatever kind; for if this were so, the shameful consequences already indicated would follow, and many others besides." C.: "In your opinion." S.: "Do you in reality adhere to this opinion?" C.: "I do." S.: "Shall we argue upon the supposition of your being in earnest?" C.: "Undoubtedly."

S.: "Tell me then There is such a thing as knowledge?" C.: "Yes." S.: "You spoke just now of courage accompanied with knowledge" C.: "I did." S.: "Courage, then, is something different from knowledge?" C.: "Very different." S.: "Are pleasure and knowledge the same thing, or different?" C.: "Very different, most wise man." S.: "And courage is

different from pleasure?" C.: "Yes." S.: "You, then, say that Pleasant and Good are the same thing, but that knowledge and courage are different from each other, and different from good. And I, do I admit this, or not?" C.: "You do not." S.: "Nor do you either, when you interpret yourself rightly.

"Is not to be in a good state, the contrary of being in a bad state?" C.: "It is." S.: "Then if they are contrary states, they, like health and disease, cannot exist together, neither can they both together cease to exist." C.: "How?" S.: "When a man's eyes are diseased, they are not in health?" C.: "No." S.: "And when he gets rid of the disease, he does not at the same time get rid of health; for this would be absurd." C.: "Exceedingly so." S.: "He receives the two things by turns, and gets rid of them by turns." C.: "Yes." S.: "And the like with strength and weakness, swiftness and slowness?" C.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "Is this likewise the case with Good and Happiness, and their opposites, Evil and Misery? Are these acquired and lost, not simultaneously, but alternately?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "Then if we find two things, both of which we begin to possess together, and both of which we cease to possess together, it is evident that these things cannot be identical with Good and Evil. Consider well before you answer." C.: "I perfectly agree with you." S.: "Let us now return to our first admissions. Is hunger pleasant or painful? I mean, hunger in itself." C.: "Hunger is painful: but to eat when we are hungry is pleasant." S.: "I understand: but to be hungry is in itself painful." C.: "Yes." S.: "And to be thirsty?" C.: "Yes." S.: "And is not all want, and all desire, painful?" C.: "I acknowledge it." S.: "Good. But to drink when you are thirsty is pleasant." C.: "Yes." S.: "When you are thirsty, is as much as to say, when you are in pain." C.: "Yes." S.: "But to drink, is to satisfy the desire, and therefore to be pleased." C.: "Yes." S.: "Then to drink when you are thirsty, is to be pleased when you are in pain and both these things may happen at the same time, whether in the body or in the mind." C.: "They may." S.: "But it was not possible, you said, to be at the same time in a good state and in a bad state." C.: "I said so." S.: "Then to be pleased is not the same thing as to be in a good state, nor to be in pain, the same as to be in a bad state, and Pleasant and Good are not the same thing but different things." C.: "I do not understand your sophisms." S.: "You do, but

you feign stupidity. Let us go on a little further, that you may see how wise you are, who take me to task. Do we not, when we cease to be thirsty, cease at the same time to receive pleasure from drinking?" C.: "I do not know what you are talking about."

Gorgias here interposed, and begged Callicles, for his sake, and that of the bystanders, not to refuse to answer, in order that the discussion might not be cut short. Callicles replied, that it was always the way with Socrates, to ask these petty and frivolous questions. "Of what consequence is that to you?" replied Gorgias; "the blame is not yours. Pray permit Socrates to carry on the argument as he pleases." "Ask then those little frivolous questions of yours," said Callicles to Socrates, "since Gorgias wishes it." "You are fortunate," answered Socrates, "in having been initiated into the greater mysteries before the smaller ones: I thought that it was not lawful \* Do not our thirst, and our pleasure in drinking, cease together?" C.: "They do." S.: "And so with all our other desires, and the pleasure of their gratification?" C.: "Yes." S.: "Then our pain and our pleasure both terminate at the same time?" C.: "Yes." S.: "But Good and Evil, you said, do not." C.: "What then?" S.: "It follows, that Good and Pleasant cannot be the same thing, nor Evil and Painful

"Let us put the argument in another way. People are called good, from the presence of good in them, as they are called beautiful from the presence of beauty in them: are they not?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "You do not call the foolish and the cowardly, good? You said, I think, that the courageous and intelligent were so." C.: "Undoubtedly." S.: "A foolish child is sometimes pleased?" C.: "Yes." S.: "And a foolish man?" C.: "I should think so; but what of that?" S.: "Nothing, only answer me. And a rational man is sometimes pleased, and is also sometimes vexed." C.: "Yes." S.: "Whether are foolish persons, or rational persons, pleased and vexed in the highest degree?" C.: "I do not think there is much difference." S.: "That is enough. You have seen cowards in war?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "Whether were the cowards, or the brave men, most pleased at the retreat of the enemy?" C.: "Much the same." S.: "It is sufficient. Then

\* An allusion to the religious ceremonies in honour of Ceres, held at Eleusis and Athens.

cowards and foolish people are sometimes pleased But when the enemy advance, are the cowards alone vexed, or the brave men also?" C.: "Both." S.: "Both equally?" C.: "The cowards, perhaps, in the greatest degree." S.: "And on the enemy's retreat, are not the cowards also the most pleased?" C.: "Perhaps." S.: "Then rational people and foolish people, brave men and cowards, are pleased, you say, nearly in the same degree, or cowards more so than brave men." C.: "Yes." S.: "But brave and rational people are good, foolish people and cowards are bad" C.: "Yes." S.: "Then good people and bad people are pleased and vexed alike." C.: "Yes." S.: "Are good people and bad people good and bad alike? or bad people rather more good and bad than good people?" C.: "I do not understand you." S.: "Did you not say, that good people are good by the presence of Good in them, and bad people by the presence of Evil, and that Good is Pleasure, and Evil is Pain?" C.: "I did." S.: "Then a person who is pleased, has Good present in him, since pleasure is Good." C.: "Certainly." S.: "Then he is a good man." C.: "Yes." S.: "And a person who is vexed, has Evil present in him, since pain is Evil." C.: "Yes." S.: "But men are bad men by the presence of Evil in them. Do you not say so?" C.: "I do" S.: "Then good men are those who are pleased, and bad men are those who are vexed" C.: "Certainly" S.: "Those are more good or bad, who are more pleased or vexed; those who are less, less; those who are equally, equally." C.: "Yes." S.: "Did you not say, that rational people and foolish people, brave people and cowards, were pleased and vexed tolerably equally, or cowards even more so than the brave?" C.: "I did." S.: "See then what follows. The good man is the rational and brave man, the bad man is the foolish man and the coward. But the good man is also the man who is pleased, the bad man he who is vexed. And the good and the bad man are pleased and vexed equally, or the bad man rather more so than the good man It follows therefore, that the bad man is equally good and equally bad with the good man, or rather more so. Is not this inevitable, if the Good and the Pleasant are the same?"

"I have listened to you," answered Callicles, "for a long time, and admitted all that you said, being aware that if one concedes anything to you even in jest, you eagerly seize hold of it like a raw youth. Do you suppose that I, or any body else, do not

think that some pleasures are better, and others worse?" "You treat me," replied Socrates, "like a child, sometimes affirming one thing, sometimes a different thing, and deceiving me. I did not think at first that you, who are my friend, would deceive me intentionally. But now I suppose I must, according to the old saying, make the best of what I can get. You say, then, that some pleasures are good, and others evil." C.: "I do"

S.: "Are the good pleasures those which are beneficial, the bad ones those which are hurtful?" C.: "Yes." S.: "By beneficial, you mean those which are causes of some good; by hurtful, those which are causes of evil." C.: "I do." S.: "For instance, as to the bodily pleasures of eating and drinking, if some of these produce in the body health or strength or some other good bodily quality, these are good, but those which produce the contraries of these effects are bad." C.: "Certainly." S.: "Among pains, likewise, there are some good and others bad, in the same manner." C.: "Undoubtedly." C.: "Then we ought to choose the good pleasures and pains, and avoid the bad?" C.: "Clearly." S.: "For it was agreed between Polus and me, that Good was the end of all our actions; and that all other things were done for the sake of Good, not Good for the sake of other things. Do you agree in this?" C.: "I do." S.: "Then the pleasant ought to be done for the sake of Good, not Good for the sake of the pleasant." C.: "Certainly." S.: "Now, are all of us capable of distinguishing those pleasant things which are good, from those which are bad, or is any art requisite for that purpose?" C.: "An art is requisite." S.: "Let us then call to mind what I said to Polus and Gorgias. I said, that there are some pursuits which have only pleasure in view, knowing nothing of good and evil, and others which know what is good and what is evil: cookery (which is a skill, and not an art) I placed in the first class; the art of medicine, in the second. And do not think it allowable to sport with me, and to answer whatever comes into your head, differently from what you think; nor, on the other hand, consider me to be in sport. For we are on a subject which even the most unthinking person would consider as the most serious of all subjects, viz: In what manner we ought to live; whether in the manner to which you exhort me, practising rhetoric, and occupying ourselves with public affairs, or in the opposite manner of life, according to philosophy; and in what respect this mode of life differs from the other.

"It is perhaps best to go on as I began, and attempt to discriminate the two modes of life from each other, and determine whether they are different, and in what respect, and which of them should be adopted. You do not, perhaps, yet know what I mean." C.: "I do not." S.: "I will be more perspicuous. We have agreed, have we not, that Pleasant and Good are not one thing but two things, and that there is a certain method for the acquisition of each." C.: "We have." S.: "Now then tell me whether you agree in what I said to our two friends. I said that cookery is only a kind of skill, but that medicine is an art: because medicine has considered the nature of the thing which it aims at producing, and the causes of the operations which it enjoins, and can render an account of them; but cookery has not considered the nature or the causes of Pleasure, which is its sole end, but goes to work empirically and unscientifically, a mere uncalculating routine, the mere memory of what has often happened. Consider then, first, whether you think that this is true, and that there are also with respect to the mind two methods similar to these; one kind which are arts, and have some forethought of what is best for the mind, another kind which disregard this, and consider only the pleasures of the mind, and the means of producing them, never considering or caring for the difference between a better pleasure and a worse. This, whether it relates to the body, to the mind, or to any thing else, I call adulation, provided it considers only pleasure, without regarding good or evil. Do you concur in this?" C.: "I do not, but I will admit it, that your argument may be completed, and that Gorgias may be gratified." S.: "Whether is this true of a single mind only, and not true of two or more?" C.: "It is true of two, or of any number." S.: "Then it is possible to gratify a number of minds collected together, without regarding their greatest Good." C.: "True." S.: "What, then, are the pursuits which do this? First of all, let us consider the art of playing the flute. Does it not seem to you to pursue pleasure only, and to care for nothing else?" C.: "Yes." S.: "And that grave and magnificent art, tragic poetry, what is its aim? Simply to gratify the spectators? Or, if any things occur to it which are pleasant but bad, does it take care not to say them; and if there be any thing disagreeable but useful, does it make a point of saying or singing this to the spectators, whether they are pleased with it or not?" C.: "It is evident that it chiefly



aims at pleasure, and the gratification of the spectators." S.: "This, however, we designated as adulation." C.: "We did." S.: "Now, then, if you take away from poetry the rhythm and the metre and the music, is there any thing remaining but discourse?" C.: "Nothing." S.: "And this discourse is addressed to the assembled people." C.: "It is." S.: "Then poetry is a kind of oratory." C.: "So it seems." S.: "But rhetoric is oratory. Do not poets appear to you to rhetorise, upon the stage." C.: "Yes." S.: "Now then we have found out a kind of rhetoric, addressed to a popular assembly, composed of men, women, and children, slaves and freemen, which we do not much admire. We call it a kind of adulation." C.: "We do."

S.: "What then shall we say of the rhetoric which is addressed to the assembly of the Athenian people, or the people of any other state, consisting of freemen only? Do the orators seem to you to have in view constantly the greatest good; aiming solely at making the people as good as possible by their discourses? Or do they, too, aim only at gratifying the citizens, neglecting the public interest for the sake of their own private concerns, and treating the people like children, attempting only to gratify them, and not caring whether they are made better or worse by the gratification?" C.: "This is not a simple question. There are some who address the people really caring for them; there are others such as you describe." S.: "It is sufficient. If this thing be of two kinds, one of them is adulation, and disgraceful, the other is laudable, contriving always that the minds of the citizens may become as good as possible, and always persisting in saying what is best, whether it be pleasing to the hearers or not. But you do not know any instance of this kind of rhetoric. Can you mention any orator who has acted in this manner?" C.: "I cannot mention any orator of the present day." S.: "Can you mention any one of the ancient orators, by whose means the Athenians became better than they were before he began to harangue them? I do not know of any." C.: "What! have you never heard of Themistocles, and Cimon, and Miltiades; and Pericles, whom you yourself have seen? all of whom were good men." S.: "Yes, if Good consists in what you at first called it, the satisfaction of our own desires and those of others: but if, as we afterwards were forced to admit, there be some desires the satisfaction of which makes us better, and others which make us worse, and that the distinguishing of these

from each other is an art; can you affirm that any of the men you named, practised that art?" C.: "I cannot tell." S.: "But if you consider well, you will see. It is not true, that a good man, who speaks with the greatest Good always in view, will not speak at haphazard, but with reference to some end? All other artists employ their various means, not picking them up at hazard, but looking to the nature of the work which they have to accomplish, and endeavouring that it may assume a certain shape. The painter, the architect, the shipbuilder—each of these, places his materials in a certain order, and contrives that one thing shall be fit and suitable to another, until the whole is completed, a regulated and ordered thing: Is it not so?" C.: "It is." S.: "A house which has regulation and order is a good house; a disordered house is a bad one." C.: "Yes." S.: "And a ship?" C.: "Yes." S.: "And our own bodies?" C.: "Yes." S.: "And our minds?" C.: "This must be admitted from the preceding admissions." S.: "What name do we give to that which arises in the body, from order and regulation?" C.: "You mean, health and strength." S.: "And what is the name of that which arises in the mind, from order and regulation?" C.: "Why do not you yourself answer?" S.: "If it pleases you, I will. If you agree with me, say so, if not, refute me. I hold, that the order of the body is termed healthiness, from whence health and all other good qualities of the body proceed; and that the order and regulation of the mind is termed lawfulness, by which men become orderly and obedient to law: and this is as much as to say, justice and self-restraint. Do you assent?" C.: "Be it so." S.: "Then a good orator, an orator according to art, in all which he says and all which he does to those to whom he addresses himself, in all which he gives to them and all which he takes away from them, will have constantly in view, in what manner justice may be produced in their minds and injustice removed, self-control produced and self-indulgence removed, all virtue produced and vice removed." C.: "Granted." S.: "For of what use is it to bestow upon a sick and ill-ordered body abundant and agreeable food or drink, which will do it no good, but often much harm?" C.: "Be it so." S.: "For it is not beneficial to man, to live with his body in a bad state; that would be to live badly." C.: "Yes." S.: "Physicians, then, usually permit a person to satisfy his desires, by eating as much as he pleases when he is hungry and drinking when he is

thirsty, so long as he is in health; but when he is sick, they do not allow him to enjoy what he desires. Do you grant this?" C.: "I do." S.: "And is not the same thing equally true of the mind? While it is in a bad state, while it is silly, and unjust, and impious, and incapable of self-control, it should be kept from what it desires, and not permitted to do any thing except what will make it better." C.: "Granted." S.: "For this is better for the mind." C.: "Yes." S.: "But to keep it from what it desires, is to punish it?" C.: "It is." S.: "Then punishment is better for the mind than impunity." C.: "I do not know what you are talking about. Ask some one else." S.: "This man cannot bear to be benefited, by suffering the very thing we are talking about, punishment." C.: "I do not care for what you say: I have answered you only on Gorgias's account." S.: "Well: what shall we do? Shall we break off the argument in the middle?" C.: "Judge for yourself." S.: "But it is not lawful, they say, to leave even a story half finished, without putting a head to it, that it may not go about headless. I beg you therefore to continue answering, that our argument may have a head put to it." C.: "How obstinate you are. If you will be persuaded by me, you will drop this discussion, or discuss with somebody else." S.: "Will anybody else, then, carry on the discussion?" C.: "Cannot you carry it on by yourself, either speaking continuously, or making answer to yourself?" S.: "It seems there is nothing else to be done. But we are all of us alike concerned in pushing the inquiry, what view of this subject is the true one. I shall therefore state the matter according to my own notions. but if any of you should think that I concede to myself what is not correct, he ought to interrupt and refute me. What I say, I do not say from knowledge; I am only inquiring, in common with yourselves; and if my opponent appears to me to say any thing just, I shall be the first to acknowledge it. If then you wish the argument to proceed, I will continue it; if not, let us leave off, and retire."

Gorgias assured Socrates, both in his own name and in that of the bystanders, that they were all anxious for the discussion to proceed.

Callicles having declined to take any further part in the argument, Socrates requested him, if he would not join in the discussion, at least to listen and stop him if he said anything incorrect.

“If you refute me,” continued Socrates, “I shall not be angry with you, as you are with me, but shall account you my greatest friend.”

Socrates then recapitulated the preceding argument, questioning and answering himself. That Pleasant and Good are not synonymous; that the Pleasant is to be pursued for the sake of good, not Good for the sake of the pleasant: That the Pleasant is that, the presence of which makes us pleased. Good, that, the presence of which makes us good. But we, like all other things that are made good, are made so by the presence of some kind of excellence; and our excellence, like that of all other things, is not brought about by haphazard, but by order and regulation, and art. “That therefore, which, when it exists in anything, makes it good, is some kind of order. An ordered mind consequently, is better than an unregulated one. But an ordered mind is a considerate one; a considerate mind therefore is good, and its opposite a mind which never resists any impulse, is bad. But a considerate mind will always do what is fitting; both towards gods and men; or it would not be considerate. But a mind which does what is fitting towards men, is a just mind; towards god a pious one. And courageous likewise. for a considerate person will neither seek nor avoid what he ought not: he will seek, and avoid, and endure, those things, those persons, those pleasures and those pains, which he ought. A considerable person, or what is the same thing, a person possessed of self-command, is therefore, as we said before, of necessity just, and brave and pious. And a good man does all things well, and is happy; a bad man does ill, and is miserable; and this is the man without self-restraint, whom you praised. If all this be true, he who would be happy must practise self-restraint, and fly from self-indulgence; he must endeavour above all things not to require punishment, but if he, or his friends, or his country, be in need of punishment, he must inflict it upon them. Such, it seems to me, is the scope and end of a good life: to produce justice and self-control in him who would be happy; not to let his desires be uncontrolled, and make it the subject of his life to satisfy them—an endless ill, the life of a pirate: for such a person cannot be loved by God or a man, for he cannot be in any sympathy or communion (*κοινωνία*) with them. Either this argument, which proves that the happy are happy by the possession of justice and self-

control, the wretched wretched by the possession of vice, must be refuted; or if this be true, we must consider what are the conclusions from it. The conclusions are, all those which you asked whether I was serious in asserting; that we ought to accuse ourselves and our friends, and bring ourselves to justice, if we commit any injury; and that is the proper employment of rhetoric. And what you thought that Polus admitted from shamefacedness, was true, viz. that to injure is more ignoble, and consequently a greater evil, than to be injured; and likewise what Polus said that Gorgias admitted from shamefacedness, that he who would be rightly a Rhetorician, must be just, and must understand justice.

“ This being the case, let us consider whether there was any ground for your reproof of me, when you said, that I am not able to protect myself or any of my friends from the greatest dangers; but that, like those who have been deprived of their civil rights by a sentence of a court of justice, I am at the mercy of any one who chooses, as you expressed it, to strike me a blow, or to take away my property, or to banish me from the state, or even to kill me: and that to be thus situated is, of all things, as you said, the most ignoble. But I have said often, and there is no reason against saying it again, that the most ignoble of all things is not to be struck unjustly, or to be robbed or put to death unjustly. To *do* all these things unjustly, or to injure me in any way whatever, is both a more ignoble and a worse thing to the person who injures, than to me who am injured. This has been established by argument strong as iron and adamant; which, unless you or some stouter man can refuse, it is impossible to speak reasonably, speaking otherwise than I do. For I always say the same thing, viz. that I do not myself know how these things are; that, however, no one, speaking in opposition to what has occurred to me on this subject, is able to avoid absurdity. I therefore lay down these things as true.

“ If however they be true; if injustice be the greatest of evils to the unjust man, but impunity in injustice a still greater evil if possible; what kind of protection is it, which, to be unable to render to one's self or one's friends, is really contemptible? Is it not that which averts the greatest evil? Is not the nobleness of being able to protect, and the ignobleness of being unable, proportional to the greatness of the evil to be averted? ” “ Certainly,” replied Callicles. S.: “ Here then are two evils: to

injure and to be injured: the first a greater evil, the latter a less. What ought we to provide ourselves with, if we mean to protect ourselves against these two evils? Power, or merely will? For example, to escape from being injured, is it sufficient that we should will not to be injured, or is power required for that purpose?" C.: "It is evident, that power is required." S.: "And to injure: Is it sufficient to prevent us from doing injustice, that we should not will to do it, or is it necessary for this purpose also, to have provided ourselves with a power, with an art, which if we do not learn, and exercise, we shall do injustice? Did you think, that Polus and I were right when we agreed that no one commits injustice willingly, but always unwillingly?" C.: "Be it so, that you may complete your argument." S.: "An art, and a power therefore, are required, in order not to do injustice." C.: "Yes." S.: "What, now, are the means by which a person may contrive that he never should be injured, or as little as possible? To me it seems that it would be requisite for him either to be a despotic ruler in the state, or to associate himself with the existing government." "Do you see," asked Callicles, "how ready I am to praise you if you say any thing good? What you now say appears to me extremely well said." S.: "Consider whether you approve also of what I shall say next. It seems to me, that, as the old sages used to say, each man loves most those who most resemble himself. Do not you think so?" C.: "I do." S.: "Then, wherever the government is in the hands of a savage and uncultured despot, if there be any person in the state who is much better than he, the despot will be afraid of him, and will never be able to love him with all his heart." C.: "Agreed." S.: "Neither would he love anyone who is much worse than himself; for he would despise him." C.: "This likewise is true." S.: "No one therefore remains to be his friend, except such as, of being of similar disposition to him, praising and blaming the same things he does, are willing to be his subjects and be governed by him. Any person of this sort will be extremely powerful in the state, and no one will injure him without being the worse for it." C.: "Yes." S.: "If then, in the state in question, any young man would contrive by what means he may become very powerful, and no one may injure him, his best plan is, to accustom himself from his youth upwards to have the same pleasures and pains with his master, and to resemble him as much as possible." C.: "Yes." S.: "By this

method he will have attained the one object, of not being injured." C : "He will." S. : "But will he have attained the other object, not to injure? or the very opposite? having made himself to resemble the ruler, who is unjust, and having attained influence with him? It seems to me, that he will have accomplished, on the contrary, the means of doing the greatest possible quantity of injustice, and escaping with impunity." C. : "So it seems." S. : "Then he will be afflicted with the greatest of evils, being evil in mind, and being corrupted by power, and by the imitation of his master." C. : "I do not know how you twist and turn the argument backwards and forwards. Do you not know that this imitator will, if he pleases, be able to destroy the non-imitator, and take his property?" S. : "Surely I do, most excellent Callicles, if I am not deaf, having heard it so often from you and Polus, and from nearly every other person in the town. But do you also listen to me, who says, that it is true he will kill him if he pleases, but if so, a bad man will kill a good one." C. : "And is not this the very thing which is to be complained of?" S. : "Not by any rational person, as the argument has shown. Do you think that a person should make it the object of all his exertions, to live as long as he can, and to study all the arts which can preserve us from dangers, such, for instance, as that rhetoric which you advised me to study, which saves our lives and fortunes in a court of justice?" C. : "And very good advice it was." S. : "Pray, does the faculty of swimming appear to you a very grave and dignified one?" C : "No, indeed." S. : "And yet, it saves men's lives, when they are in circumstances in which that faculty is needed. If this should appear to you a trifling instance, I will give you a greater one, the art of navigation; which not only saves our lives but our property from the greatest of dangers, like rhetoric. And yet this art is unassuming and modest, and does not take honour to itself as having effected something splendid, but if it has brought you safe from Aegina hither, it charges two oboli, and if from the distance Pontus or Egypt, having saved your wife, yourself, your children, your fortune, it lands you here and charges two drachmae; and the man whose art has accomplished all this, goes down to the beach, and walks about his ship with a humble dress and demeanour. For he is aware, I take it, that it is impossible to tell whom among his passengers he has benefited and whom he has harmed by not suffering them to be drowned, knowing that he has landed them

no better men than he took them on board, either in body or mind. He considers, that if any one, being afflicted with great and incurable bodily diseases, has been saved from ship wreck, he is unfortunate in not having perished, as from having received any benefit; and if any one has many incurable diseases in what is of greater price than the body, his mind, it is no benefit to this man to be saved from death, whether by sea or by the executioner; since it is not good for the bad man to live, for he must live badly. Therefore a pilot is not held in reverence, though he saves our lives. Nor an engineer either, who is sometimes as potent a preserver as either a pilot or a general; for he occasionally saves whole cities. Do you think as highly of him as you do of a rhetorician? And yet, if he were to exalt his profession after your fashion, and call upon all men to become engineers, on account of the exalted excellence of the art, he would have enough to say. But you in spite of all this, despise him and his art, and would call him an engineer as a term of disdain, and would not give your daughter to his son, or allow your son to marry his daughter. And yet, by your own account of yourself, what ground have you for looking down upon the engineer, and the other people whom I have mentioned? I know you would say, you are better and of a better sort. But if to be better does not consist in what I said; if all excellence consists in being able to preserve ourselves and what belongs to us, no matter what sort of man we are; then your disdain of the engineer and the physician, and of the other arts which have our preservation in view, is ridiculous. But observe, whether nobleness and goodness do not consist in something quite different from saving and being saved: For a true man should not make it his study to live as long as possible, but should commit this to God, and believing what the women say, that no man can escape his destiny, should consider in what manner, so long as he does live, he may live best. Should he assimilate himself to the government under which he lives? and should you now study to resemble the Athenian people, that you may be a favourite with them, and may be powerful in the state? Let us consider well, lest we should purchase this power at the expense of what we most value. For if you think that any one can teach you an art which will make you powerful in this state, being dissimilar to the government of it, whether for better or worth, you are mistaken. You must be not even an imitator of it, but actually similar to it in your



own nature, if you would have any success in courting the favour of the Athenian people. Whoever, therefore, shall make you most like to the Athenian people, will make you such a politician and rhetorician, as you desire to become: for every person is pleased with discourse conformable to his own disposition, and displeased with that which is unconformable to it. Can you say anything against this?" C.: "You seem to me, I do not know why, to speak well: but I am like most people, I am not much persuaded by you." S.: "The passion for the people, with which your soul is filled, resists me. But if we consider the subject better, and frequently, you will perhaps be persuaded.

"Remember, now, that we said, there were two methods of ministering either to the body or the mind; the one having in view Pleasure, the other aiming at the greatest Good, whether producing pleasure or pain." C.: "We did." S.: "That which aims at pleasure, is ignoble, and no better than adulation." C.: "Let it be so if you please." S.: "The other aims at what is best for that which it serves, be it the body or the mind." C.: "Yes." S.: "Ought we not then to attach ourselves to the service of our country and our countrymen, with a view to make them as good as we can? For without this, as we have found before, it is of no use, to render them any other benefit; since if their minds are not well ordered, it does them no good to obtain either wealth or authority or any other power. Is it not so?" C.: "If you will."

S.: "If then we were exhorting one another to apply ourselves to the public works, the building of walls, or temples, or docks, ought we not to examine ourselves, and see in the first place, whether we understand the art of architecture, or not, and under what master we have studied it?" C.: "Certainly." S.: "And next, whether we have ever constructed any private edifice, for ourselves or any of our friends, and whether it be a good or bad one. For if, examining ourselves, we found that we have studied under good and celebrated teachers, and had erected many admirable edifices, first under our masters, and afterwards by ourselves when we had left our masters, we should then act like reasonable beings in undertaking the public works. But if we could not name any person who had been our teacher, nor point to any building which we had erected, or to any that were not worthless, it would be senseless in us to take upon ourselves the construction of any public work, and to exhort each other to

do so. Is this rightly said or not?" C.: "It is." S.: "And so likewise if we were about to practise as physicians, or were inviting one another to do so, you and I ought to consider of one another thus: Pray how is Socrates in respect of health? Has any one been ever cured of an illness through his means? And I should ask the same questions respecting you. And if we could not discover, that any one, foreigner or citizen, man or woman, had been brought in a better state of body by our means, would it not be ridiculous in us to attempt, as the proverb says, to learn pottery in the pot itself, and endeavour to practise for the public before we had tried in private, failed often and succeeded often, until we have sufficiently exercised ourselves in the art?" C.: "It would." S.: "Now, then, since you have recently begun to transact the affairs of the state, and are calling on me and reproaching me, because I do not follow your example, let us examine one another: Pray has Callicles ever made any of the citizens a better man? Is there any person, foreigner or citizen, slave or freeman, who, having been previously unjust and intemperate and thoughtless, has been made a good man by Callicles? If anyone were to ask you this question, what would you say? Do you not like to answer whether you have accomplished any achievement of this sort while yet in a private station, before you attempted to practise publicly?" C.: "You are reproachful." S.: "I do not ask the question from any wish to reproach you, but from a real wish to know in what way you think that men ought to conduct themselves in public life, and whether you, in your public conduct, will be intent upon anything else, than that we, the citizens, may be as good as possible. Have we not frequently agreed that this is what a politician should do? Have we agreed or not? Answer. We have agreed: I will answer for you.

"If, then this be what a good man should do for his country, pray look back and tell me, whether Pericles and Cimon, and Miltiades and Themistocles, still appear to you to have been good citizens." C.: "They do." S.: "Then, if they were so, each of them must have made his countrymen better than they were before. Did they, or not?" C.: "They did." S.: "Then, when Pericles began to speak in the public assemblies, the Athenians were worse men than they were when he last addressed them?" C.: "Perhaps so." S.: "Not *perhaps*, but they positively *must*, if he was a good citizen; by our former

admissions." C.: "What then?" S.: "Nothing. But tell me this; whether the Athenians are said to have been made better by Pericles, or on the contrary, to have been corrupted by him. For I hear it said that Pericles made the Athenians idlers and cowards, and gossips and covetous, being the first who accustomed them to receive pay." \* C.: "Those who told you so are Spartans at heart." S.: "One thing, however, I was not told, but we both of us know it; that Pericles was in high reputation, and never was condemned on any disgraceful charge by the Athenians, at first, when they were comparatively bad men; but after he had made them virtuous men, towards the end of his life, they found him guilty of peculation, and were near passing sentence of death upon him." C.: "What then? Does this prove Pericles a bad statesman?" S.: "A superintendent of asses, at least, or of horses or oxen, would be thought a very bad one, if the animals did not kick, and start, and bite when they were intrusted to him, but did all this when they quitted his charge. Is not that person, in your opinion a bad guardian of any animal, who sends him forth more savage than he received him?" C.: "I will say yes, to please you." S.: "Will you also please me by answering whether man is an animal or not?" C.: "Unquestionably." S.: "And Pericles was a superintendent of men." C.: "Yes." S.: "Ought they not then, if he, their superintendent had been a good politician, to have become more just, not more unjust under his care?" C.: "Yes." S.: "But the just, as Homer says, are gentle. What say you?" C.: "The same." S.: "Now, he left them more ferocious than he received them, and that too towards himself, towards whom he least desired it." C.: "Do you wish me to agree with you?" C.: "If you think, that I speak the truth." C.: "Be it so, then." S.: "And if more ferocious, then more unjust, and worse." C.: "Be it so." S.: "Then Pericles was not a good statesman." C.: "So say you." S.: "And you too, from your own admission. And what of Cimon? Did not those whom he served banish him by ostracism, that for ten years they might not hear his voice? And did they not banish Themistokles, and sentence Miltiades to a dungeon? If these had been good statesmen, they would not have been so treated. A good coachman does not at first keep his seat, but after he has trained his horses, and learned to be a better driver, then fall off. This does not happen

\* For attending as jurymen, and at public assemblies.

either in driving or in any thing else: does it, think you?" C.: "No." S.: "Then we were right in saying that we knew of no man who had been a good statesman in this nation. You allowed that there was none in our own day, but affirmed that there were such persons formerly, and instanced these men. But these, it appears, are on a level with those of the present day; so that, if they were rhetoricians, they neither possessed the true rhetoric, nor even that which is a kind of adulation, otherwise they would not have been so unsuccessful." "But," said Callicles, "no one in the present day has approached to these men in the works which they accomplished." "Neither do I disparage them," replied Socrates, "in the character of ministrators to the people's inclination: I think that they were much more skilful ministrators than the men of our day and more capable of providing for the nations what it desired. But in respect of changing its desires, and not giving way to them, but exhorting and impelling the nation to those courses by which the citizens might become better men, they did not differ from our own contemporaries: and this alone is the business of a good citizen. In providing ships and walls, and docks, and so forth, I grant that these men were abler than ours.

"You and I are acting very ridiculously. All this time we continually return to the same point, and never know each other's meaning. I think you have often admitted that there are two kinds of pursuits relating to the body and the mind, one of them merely ministrative, which can provide food for our bodies if they are hungry, drink if they are thirsty, clothes if they are cold, and in short whatever the body desires. I purposely repeat the same illustrations constantly, that you may the more easily understand me. It is no wonder that anyone who is capable of providing these things, whether he be a dealer or producer, a cook, or weaver, and so forth, should think himself and be thought by others the proper guardian of the body; so long as they do not know, that there is besides all this, an art of gymnastics and medicine, which is the real guardian of the body; and which it is fit should govern all these other arts, and make use of them as instruments, because these arts know what food and drink are good and bad, with reference to excellence of the body, but the others do not know; for which reason these are all slavish and illiberal, and simply ministerial, and gymnastics and medicine ought in justice to be sovereign over them. You

sometimes appear to know, that I assert this to be true likewise of the mind, and you assent, as if you understood my meaning: but you presently turn back, and say that there have been excellent citizens in this state, and when I ask who, you name to me exactly such a kind of politicians, as if, when I asked you what good gymnasts and superintendents of the body there are or have been, you were gravely to answer, Thearion the baker, and Mithaecus the author of the cookery book, and Sarambus the tavern keeper, saying that these were surprisingly good in the care and treatment of the body, by providing excellent bread, and meat and wine. You would perhaps be angry, if I were to answer, My friend, you know nothing of gymnastics; you tell me of people who can only minister to me and supply my desires, having no sound knowledge respecting them; and who perhaps, after swelling and fattening men's bodies, and being praised by them, will end by destroying even their original flesh. They, indeed, from inexperience, will not perhaps lay upon these men who crammed them, the blame of their diseases and loss of flesh; but when their former repletion, not being of a healthy kind, shall long after produce diseases, they will reproach and punish those who happen to be attending on them and advising them at that time, but will eulogise the original authors of their ills. You, Callicles, now do precisely the same thing. You eulogise the men who, having feasted the Athenians and crammed them with what they desire, are said to have made them a great nation, because it is not perceived that the commonwealth is tumid and hollow, through those men of antiquity: for, without making us just or temperate, they have crammed us with ports, and docks and fortifications, and revenues and such trumpery. When the crisis arrives, the Athenians will lay the blame upon their then advisers; they will eulogise Themistocles, and Cimon, and Pericles, the authors of their calamity; but when they have lost their original possessions as well as those more recently acquired, perhaps they will revenge themselves upon you, if you do not take care, and upon my friend Alcibiades, who were not the original authors of their evils, although perhaps you may have assisted in producing them.

“And by the way, I observe that something which is very unusual, is very unreasonable. When the state takes hold of any of its statesmen, and treats them as criminals, they are indignant, and represent themselves as ill used men, who having rendered

many great services to the state, are unjustly destroyed by it. This is all imposture. A leading man in a state *cannot* be unjustly destroyed by the state of which he is the leader. Those who call themselves politicians, resemble those who call themselves sophists. The sophists, in other respects wise men, do one thing which is very absurd: Calling themselves teachers of virtue, they often reproach their disciples for wronging them by not paying their hire, and not showing them gratitude for the good they have done them. What can be more senseless than this, that men who have become virtuous and just, men who have been purified from injustice by their teacher, and imbued with justice, should be unjust? Do you not think this absurd? You have forced me really to harangue, Callicles, not being willing to answer." C.: "Cannot you speak, unless someone will answer you?" S.: "It seems, I can; for I have been speaking for a long time, since you will not answer. But tell me in the name of friendship: Do you not think it very absurd, that he who says he has made someone a good man, should blame him, that having been made by him, and still being, a good man, he is nevertheless a bad one?" C.: "I think so." S.: "And do you not hear those who profess to instruct men in virtue, speaking in this manner?" C.: "I do. But why do you talk about men who are good for nothing?" \* S.: "And what will you say of those, who, professing to have been at the head of the nation, and have managed it so that it should become as good as possible, afterwards turn round and reproach it as being wicked? Do you think, that such persons are any better than those you despise? A sophist, and a rhetorician, are the same thing, or very much alike, as I said to Polus. But you, from ignorance, think the one a fine thing, and despise the other. In reality, the pursuit of the sophist is nobler than that of the rhetorician, as the art of Legislation is nobler than the art of Judicature, and Gymnastics than Medicine. . . . I for my part, thought that orators and sophists were the only persons who were not entitled to accuse their scholars of behaving ill to them; for in the same breath they would be accusing themselves of having done no good to those whom they undertook to improve. Is it not so?" C.: "It is."

\* Another incidental proof of the contempt in which the sophists were held by the very persons whom they are said to have corrupted; politicians and men of the world. We recur frequently to this topic, because it is one on which the Tory writers have usually enjoyed full liberty of misrepresentation.

S.: "And they alone should have in their power to bestow their particular kind of service without pay. A person, who has received any other service, who has, for instance, acquired swiftness by the instructions of a gymnast, might perhaps be ungrateful to the gymnast, unless he previously made a contract with him for the payment of hire. For men are not unjust by slowness, but by injustice." C.: "Yes." S.: "Then if any one frees them from this quality of injustice, there is no danger of their being unjust to him. If he can really make men good, he alone may with safety cast this benefit at random." C.: "He may." S.: "Therefore, it is no disgrace to take money for giving advice on any other subject, as on building, for example," C.: "No." S.: "But on this subject, how one may become most virtuous, and may best administer one's family or the state, it is considered disgraceful to say that we will not give advice unless we are paid for it." C.: "Yes." S.: "And why? Because of all services this is the only one which of itself inspires the person benefited with a desire to repay the obligation: so that it is a sign of having performed this service well, if we are requited for it, ill, if we are not. Is not this true?" C.: "It is."

S.: "To which, then, of these kinds of services do you exhort me? As a physician, to strive that the Athenians may become as good as possible? Or as a mere ministrative officer, to wait upon their desires? Speak out boldly." C.: "I say then, as a ministrative officer." S.: "You call upon me then, to become an adulator." C.: "Had you rather be called a Mysian? \* as you certainly will, if you do not follow this advice." S.: "Do not say, as you have said so often, that any one who pleases may put me to death; lest I should answer, that if so, a bad man will put to death a good one. Nor that he will deprive me of my substance; lest I should reply, that if he does, he will not be able to use it for his good; but as he acquired it unjustly, so he will use it unjustly; if unjustly ignobly; and if ignobly, perniciously to himself." C.: "How confident you seem to be that you are in no danger of these things! as if you could not be brought into danger of your life, even perhaps by a worthless fellow." S.: "I must be very foolish, if I did not know, that in this state any one whatever may be so treated. Thus, however, I well know, that

\* The most despised of all foreign nations. Witness the phrase *Μυσων λεία*, the spoil of the Mysian, applied to any people so poor in spirit, that even the unwarlike Mysians could plunder them with impunity.

if I should, as you say, be charged with a criminal offence, it will be a bad man who charges me; for no good man would indict a man who does no wrong. And it will be no wonder if I should be put to death. Shall I tell you why I think so?" C.: "If you please." S.: "I think that I, with a very few other Athenians (not to say I alone), cultivate the true art of politics, and that I alone, among the men of the present day, am a politician in the true sense of the word. Since then I say whatever I do say, not for the gratification of any one, but aiming at what is best, not at what is most agreeable, and not choosing to do those fine things which you recommend, I shall not know what to say in a court of justice. What I said to Polus would apply to myself. I shall be judged as a physician would, if tried before children, on the accusation of a cook. What could such a person say in his defence? Suppose his accuser to say, See what evils this man had inflicted upon you, cutting and burning and emaciating you, giving you bitter drougths and forcing you to fast; not like me who has feasted you with everything that is delightful. What could the physician say to all this? If he said the truth, 'I did all these things for your health,' do you not think that such judges would hoot him down?" C.: "Probably." S.: "And I myself, I well know, should be treated in a similar manner, if I were brought before a court of justice. For I shall not be able to remind the judges of any pleasures that I have procured for them, which are what they understand by benefits. But I do not envy either the providers or those for whom they provide. And if any one should say that I corrupt the youth by unsettling their minds, or libel the older men by bitter speeches, either in private or in public, I shall neither be able to say the truth, viz. 'I say and do all these things justly, and therefore for your good,' nor shall I have any other defence; so that I must be content to undergo my fate." C.: "Does a man then, who is thus situated, so unable to protect himself, appear to you to be as he should be?" S.: "If that be in him, of which we have so often spoken: if he have protected himself, by never having said or done anything unjust, either towards men or gods. For this is, as we have frequently admitted, the best sort of self-protection. If, therefore, any one should convict me of being incapable of affording *this* protection to myself or others, I should be ashamed, whether I were convicted in the presence of many, or of one only; and if I were to perish of this kind of incapability, I should be grieved;



but if I should die for want of Adulatory Rhetoric, I should bear my death very easily. Death itself no one fears, who is not altogether irrational and unmanly; but to commit injustice is an object of rational fear, for to arrive in the other world with the soul loaded with crimes, is the greatest of evils. I will, if you please, set forth to you in what manner this happens. I will relate to you a history, which you will, as I think, consider a fable, but I shall state it to you as true."

Socrates then introduces a *mythos* or legend, of the description so frequent in Plato, and which he never seems to deliver as truth, but as a symbol of some truth. This *mythos* relates to a future state, and a general judgment of mankind. Formerly (he says) men were judged on the day on which they were destined to die and were tried by living judges: but Plato and the guardians of Elysium complained to Jupiter, that people frequently were sent to them who were undeserving; for, being tried while yet alive, they were tried with their mortal garments not stripped off; and many whose souls were evil, had dressed them out in a handsome body, and rank and wealth, and when the trial came on, they produced many witnesses, to assert that they had led a just life and the judges were imposed upon by these means, more especially as they also were still alive, and gross material organs obstructed the clearness of their mental sight. On this account it was ordered that men should no longer foresee their own death; and that they should be tried naked, that is, not till they were dead, and by judges who were likewise dead and naked. Aeacus, Rhadamantus, and Minos, therefore, judge mankind, at the place where the two roads to Tartarus and Elysium separate. "Death," added Socrates, "is merely the separation of the body and the soul. Each of them remains the same in its own nature. The body, for some time at least, continues of the same figure and aspect, and with the same marks upon it, as during life; and the soul likewise, when stripped of the body, discloses its natural state, as well as all the artificial impressions which have been made upon it by the habits acquired during life. These judges therefore, when the soul comes to them, know not whose souls they are, but often take hold of the soul of the Great King,\* or any other monarch, or powerful man, and finding nothing sound in it, but seeing it branded and imprinted with the stigmas of perjury and injustice which the practices of the man during his life have left

\* The name by which the Greeks denoted the King of Persia.

upon it, and finding it crooked and awry from having been nurtured in falsehood and deception, and full of baseness and disorderliness from habits of luxury and insolence and self-indulgence, they dismiss it to the place of torment. All punishment when properly inflicted, is designed either to benefit the sufferer by making him better, or to be a warning to others, and render them better by the terror of the example. Those whose vices are curable, are benefited by their torments; such benefits can only arise from suffering, either here or in Tartarus; for there are no other means of being cured of injustice. But those whose crimes are of the deepest dye, and who are consequently incurable, are made examples of, and are not benefited by their punishment, being incurable, but serve to benefit the beholders, being hung up as an example to those vicious men who come there. Of these Archelaus will be one, if Polus has told truth respecting him. I apprehend that most of these examples are yielded by despots and powerful statesmen; for they, from the greater licence which they possess, commit the greatest crimes. Homer bears witness to this, for he has represented those who suffer eternally in hell as all of them kings, Tantalus, and Sisyphus, and Tityus: he has not placed Thersites, or any other wicked private individual, among those who suffer the great punishments as being incurable; for it was not in the power of these men to commit the greater crimes: by so much the happier they. It is not, however, absolutely impossible even for statesmen and powerful men, to be virtuous; and they who are so, are highly to be extolled: for it is difficult to live justly with much liberty of committing injustice, and few are they who do so. There have been such men, however, and probably there will be again, both here and elsewhere, whose greatness consists in performing *justly* that which is instructed to them: and one very notable instance throughout all Greece, was Aristides. When, on the contrary, the judges behold a soul which was lived in holiness and truth (usually, as I affirm, that of a philosopher, who has minded his own affairs, and not taken much part in active life), they commend him, and dismiss him to Elysium.

“I, therefore, make it my study so to act, that I shall appear before my judge with my soul in the soundest possible state. Letting alone the honours which the Many confer, and pursuing the Truth, I endeavour to live well, and when the time shall come, to die well. And to the best of my ability I call upon all men to

do the same; and I exhort you, in my turn, to this mode of life, and this struggle, which is worth all the struggles here: and I tell you, that you will not be able to protect yourself, but when Aeacus calls you before him, you will gape and stare as much as I should here, and perhaps someone will strike you a blow, and insult you with every kind of contumely.

“Perhaps you may despise all this, and think it an old woman’s tale. And there would be nothing wonderful in despising it, if, by seeking, we could find anything better and more true. But now you see that you, the three wisest men now living in Greece, you, and Polus, and Gorgias, are not able to show that any other course of life should be pursued, than that which this story pronounces to be for our interest in a future state; but amid so many refutations, this conclusion alone rests undisturbed, that to injure should be more guarded against than to be injured, and that it ought to be our greatest study not to appear good, but to *be* good, both in private and in public; and that if in any respect we become wicked, we should be punished, and that the next best thing to *being* just, is to *become* so by being punished; and that all adulation, whether of ourselves or of others, of a few or of many, should be avoided, and rhetoric, and every thing else, should be employed for the purpose of justice only. Be advised by me, therefore, and follow me thither, where, if you arrive, you will be happy both in life and after death. And suffer any man to despise you as a fool, and to insult you if he will, aye, and to strike you even that disgraceful blow: for you will suffer nothing by it if you are really excellent, and practise virtue. And having thus practised it in common, we will then, if we see fit, apply ourselves to public life, or adopt any course to which our deliberations may lead us, being then fitter for deliberation than we are now. For it is shameful, being as it seems we are, to value ourselves as being somebody; we who never think the same thing on the same subject, and that the greatest of all subjects; so ignorant are we. Let us use, therefore, as our guide, the argument which we have now investigated; which tells us, that the best mode of life, is to live and die in the practice of justice, and of all other virtue. This road let us follow, and to this let us exhort all others; not that to which you exhorted me; for it is good for nothing, O Callicles.”

The reader has now seen the substance of what the greatest

moralist of antiquity finds to say in recommendation of a virtuous life. His arguments, like those of moralists in general, are not of a nature to convince many, except those who do not need conviction; there are few of them which Polus and Callicles, had the author endowed them with dialectical skill equal to his own, might not easily have parried. But is not this an inconvenience necessarily attending the attempt to prove the eligibility of virtue by argument? Argument may show what general regulation of the desires, or what particular course of conduct, virtue requires: *How* to live virtuously, is a question the solution of which belongs to the understanding: but the understanding has no inducements which it can bring to the aid of one who has not yet determined whether he will endeavour to live virtuously or no. It is impossible, by any arguments, to prove that a life of obedience to duty is preferable, so far as respects the agent himself, to a life of circumspect and cautious selfishness. It will be answered, perhaps, that virtue is the road to happiness, and that "honesty is the best policy." Of this celebrated maxim, may we not venture to say, once for all, without hesitation or reserve, that it is not true? The whole experience of mankind runs counter to it. The life of a good man or woman is full of unpraised and unrequited sacrifices. In the present dialogue, which, though scanty in conclusive arguments, is rich in profound reflections, there is one remark of which the truth is quite universal—that the world loves its like, and refuses its favour to its unlike. To be more honest than the many is nearly as prejudicial, in a worldly sense, as to be a greater rogue. They, indeed, who have no conception of any higher honesty than is practised by the majority of the society in which they live, are right in considering such honesty as accordant with policy. But how is he indemnified, who scruples to do that which his neighbours do without scruple? Where is the reward, in any worldly sense, for heroism? Civilisation, with its *laissez-aller* and its *laissez-faire* which it calls tolerance, has, in two thousand years, done thus much for the moral hero, that he now runs little risk of drinking hemlock like Socrates, or, like Christ, of dying on the cross. The worst that can well happen to him is to be everywhere ill spoken of, and to fail in all his worldly concerns: and if he be unusually fortunate, he may, perhaps, be so well treated by the rest of mankind, as to allowed to be honest in peace.

The old monk in Rabelais had a far truer notion of worldly wisdom:—"To perform your appointed task indifferently well; never to speak ill of your superiors; and to let the mad world go its own way, for it *will* go its own way." \*

All valid arguments in favour of virtue, presuppose that we already desire virtue, or desire some of its ends and objects. You may prove to us that virtue tends to the happiness of mankind, or of our country; but that supposes that we already care for mankind, or for our country. You may tell us, that virtue will gain us the approbation of the wise and the good; but this supposes that the wise and good are already more to us than other people are. Those only will go along with Socrates in the preceding dialogue, who already feel that the accordance of their lives and inclinations with some scheme of duty is necessary to their comfort; whose feeling, if virtue are already so strong, that if they allow any other consideration to prevail over those feelings, they are really conscious that the health of their souls is gone, and that they are, as Plato affirms, in a state of disease. But no arguments which Plato urges have power to make those love or desire virtue, who do not already: nor is this ever effected through the intellect, but through the imagination and the affections.

The love of virtue, and every other noble feeling, is not communicated by reasoning, but caught by inspiration or sympathy from those who already have it; and its nurse and foster-mother is Admiration. We acquire it from those we love and reverence, especially from those whom we earliest love and reverence; from our ideal of those, whether in past or in present times, whose lives and characters have been the mirrors of all noble qualities; and lastly, from those who, as poets or artists, can clothe those feelings in the most beautiful forms, and breathe them into us through our imagination and our sensations. It is thus that Plato has deserved the title of a great moral writer. Christ did not argue about virtue, but commanded it: Plato, when he argues about it, argues for the most part inconclusively; but he resembles Christ in the love which he inspires for it, and in the stern resolution never to swerve from it, which those who can relish his writings naturally feel when perusing them. And the present writer regrets that his imperfect abstract is

\* *Fungi officio taliter qualiter; nunquam male loqui de superioribus; sinere insanum mundum vadere quò vult; nam vult vadere quò vult.*

so ill fitted to convey any idea of the degree in which this dialogue makes the feelings and course of life which it inculcates commend themselves to our inmost nature, by associating them with our most impressive conceptions of beauty and power.

## IV

### THE APOLOGY OF SOCRATES

WE have given several specimens of the philosophy of Socrates, as exhibited, and doubtless improved, by Plato, in those of his works which there is no reason to consider as having any foundation in real incidents, or conversations actually held between the supposed interlocutors. It will now be interesting to the reader to be introduced to Socrates as described by himself, in the work which stands among Plato's writings under the title of the *Apology of Socrates*, and in the form of a speech delivered before his judges, on the celebrated trial for blasphemy, which terminated in his capital condemnation. It has been a question among the critics, whether this speech is the work of Socrates himself, or of Plato under his master's name. But the discerning Schleiermacher, and a scholar and critic not unworthy to be named even with Schleiermacher, the Rev. Connop Thirlwall, have adduced reasons which, in our judgment, leave little doubt that a speech, substantially identical with that which is now about to engage our attention, was actually delivered by Socrates at his trial; and that Plato, in this case, aimed only at being a faithful reporter of what his master had thought fit to say in his own vindication, when prosecuted for his life on the accusation of corrupting the youth, and of being an unbeliever in the gods of his country.\*

An abstract, such as those we gave of the three dialogues which have successively occupied our attention, would entirely fail to give any conception of this singular performance: and after some consideration, we have resolved upon attempting an exact translation. It would, however, require a Plato, so to translate Plato as to render the ideas intelligible to an English reader, in the exact shape in which they were presented by an Athenian speaker to an Athenian audience, preserving, at the same time, all the energy and beauty of the style. We have been obliged to confine ourselves to one or the other object: either to put something like the matter of this discourse into the best English we could command, sacrificing all that is characteristic of the manner of Socrates, and

\* The sentiments both of Schleiermacher and of Mr. Thirlwall may be found at full length in the sixth number of the *Philological Museum*.

of the notions and feelings of the Athenian public; or else, to retain the very thoughts of Socrates, and his very mode of stating and illustrating those thoughts, but to exchange Plato's eloquent Greek for an English style at once bald and verbose. We have preferred the latter course, as more conducive to the objects we have in view in these papers.

### SPEECH OF SOCRATES BEFORE HIS JUDGES

In what manner, O Athenians, you have been affected by my accusers, I know not; I myself, in listening to them, almost forgot that I was myself, so plausibly did they speak. Although, of what they said, not one word, I may say, was true. Among the many falsehoods which they told you, one in particular excited my astonishment; when they said that you should beware lest you be deceived by me, who am a powerful speaker. For, their not being ashamed to be immediately contradicted by the fact, when I am seen to be not at all a powerful speaker, appeared to me most shameless. Unless, indeed, they call him a powerful speaker who speaks the truth. If so, I admit myself to be an orator of a different kind from them. They, as I affirm, have spoken no truth; from me you will hear all the truth. Not, indeed, O Athenians, a speech like theirs, all tricked out with fine words and phrases: what I say, will be said unstudiedly, in such words as offer themselves. For I am convinced that all which I say is just; none of you need expect any thing else of me. Nor would it become these years, O Athenians, to appear before you spinning phrases like a stripling. And this, O Athenians, I especially solicit of you; that if you hear me make my defence in the very same style of language in which I am accustomed to speak in the streets and public places, where most of you have heard me, and elsewhere, you will neither be surprised nor clamorous. For the fact is this: At the age of seventy and more, I now for the first time appear in a court of justice; I am, therefore, a complete stranger to the ways of speaking in this place. As then, if I were really a stranger, you would have pardoned me for speaking in the language and style in which I was brought up, so I now ask of you this justice, as it appears to me, that you will disregard the manner of my speech—which perhaps may be better, perhaps worse—but consider and attend to this, Whether what I say is just or not. For that is the excellence of a judge; an orator's is to speak the truth.

I have to defend myself first, O Athenians, from the first false accusations against me, and from my first accusers; and afterwards from the more recent ones. For I have had many accusers; who have spoken falsely of me now for many years: whom I



fear more than Anytus and his associates, although these also are formidable; but those are still more so, O Athenians, who have begun with most of you from your childhood upwards, and poured into your ears false accusations of me, saying that there is one Socrates, a wise man, who has explored the things which are in the sky and under the earth, and who makes the worse appear the better reason. They, O Athenians, who have spread such a character of me, are my really dangerous accusers; for their hearers believe that those who are addicted to such inquiries do not even believe in gods.\* These accusers, too, are numerous; they have now spoken ill of me for a long time, and to many of you in the most credulous time of your lives, when you were children, or mere lads, and with all the advantage of an undefended cause, no one replying to them. And, what is hardest of all, one cannot so much as know the names of any of these people, except perhaps, a play-writer or so.† Neither they who, by calumnies and invidious speaking, have wrought upon you, nor they who, being themselves persuaded, have persuaded others, can be cited to appear in this place. I cannot confute them, but must fight, as it were, with shadows, and refute when there is no one here to answer my questions. Consider, then, that I have to do with two sets of accusers, my present ones, and those ancient ones whom I have mentioned; and observe, that I must reply to the old accusers first, for you heard them first, and during a much longer time than these later ones.

Be it so, then; I must defend myself, and endeavour to expel from your minds, in so short a time, the calumny which has had so long a time to fix itself there. I should be glad (if it be for your good and my own) that this were possible; but I think it is difficult; I do not conceal from myself the weightiness of the task. The event, however, must be as the god pleases. I must obey the law, and make my defence.

Let us go back, then, to the beginning, and see upon what accusation has been founded that prejudice against me, in reliance on which Melitus has brought the present impeachment. What, then, did my assailants allege? for we must consider them as accusers, and read the words of their indictment. "Socrates is guilty of occupying himself with frivolous and criminal pursuits; exploring the things which are under the earth and in the sky; and making the worse appear the better reason; and teaching others to do the same." Something of this sort is what they

\* This passage, and much other evidence, shows that physical speculation of a recondite kind was regarded by the Greeks as a sort of black art, like witchcraft and sorcery among the moderns: "an attempt to know more than is permitted." There is remarkable sameness in superstition, all over the world.

† *πλὴν εἰ τις κωμωδοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὄν.* An allusion to Aristophanes, and his comedy of *The Clouds*, a gross and ignorant libel on Socrates.

impute to me; and you have yourselves seen, in the comedy of Aristophanes, a certain Socrates, who professes to walk the air, with much other trifling, about which I do not understand one jot. And I do not speak in disparagement of such knowledge, if there be any one who is wise in these matters; but I have no concern with them. And I call most of yourselves to witness, and beg you to inform and to ask each other (those of you who have ever heard me converse), and there are many of them among you: tell to one another, if any of you has ever heard in my conversation anything, great or small, on such subjects; and by this you will know, that all the other things which are vulgarly said about me are of the same value. Again, if you have heard any one say that I undertake to instruct people, and receive money for it, neither is this true. I think it a fine thing, no doubt, if any one is capable of instructing people, as Gorgias of Leontium does, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis. Each of these, going to one city after another, is able to draw round him the young men, who, though they are at liberty to converse gratis with whomsoever they please of their own citizens, are persuaded to quit the society of these, and, resorting to the new-comers, converse with them, not only paying them money, but rendering gratitude to them besides. There is now in this very town a wise man from Paros, whose arrival I happened to hear of; for I was accidentally in company with a man who has paid more money to sophists than all other men put together, Callias, the son of Hipponicus. I said to him (for he has two sons), "O Callias, if your sons had been colts or steers, we could have found and hired a proper superintendent of their education, who could have formed them to all the good qualities befitting their nature; but now, since they are men, what superintendent have you in view for them? Who is there that is knowing in the good qualities of a man and a citizen? for I suppose that you must have considered the matter, having sons to bring up. Is there such a person," said I, "or not?" "There is," he answered. "Who," asked I, "and of what country, and for what price does he teach?" "Euenus of Paros," replied he; "and his price is five minae." And I felicitated Euenus, if he in reality possesses this art, and is so zealous in the practice of it. I, too, therefore, should be proud, and make much of myself, if I knew these matters; but I do not know them, O Athenians.

Some of you may, perhaps, answer, "But, O Socrates, what, then, is your affair? and whence did these accusations arise? for you would not have been so much heard of or talked about, if you had done nothing strange, or different from other people: tell us, therefore, what it is, that we may not be left to conjecture." This appears to me a very fair question; and I will try to explain to you what it is which has made me so talked about, and so

calumniated. Listen, then: and perhaps some of you may think I am in jest; be well persuaded, however, that I am telling you the whole truth. I, O Athenians, have acquired this reputation, from no other cause than a certain wisdom. What kind of wisdom? That which, perhaps, is the true *human* wisdom; and the fact seems to be that I possess this wisdom: they whom I have just spoken of have, perhaps, a wisdom greater than that of man; but I certainly do not possess it, and whoever says so speaks falsely, and wishes to slander me. And do not clamour, O Athenians, even if I seem to speak boastfully; for what I am about to say does not come from myself, but from a source worthy of your attention. I shall produce the Delphic god as a witness to you respecting my wisdom, whether I have any, and of what sort. You knew Chaerephon, doubtless. He was my associate from youth, and was also an associate of the Athenian many; he quitted his country with you, and returned with you.\* And you know what kind of a man was Chaerephon, how energetic in whatsoever he engaged in. He once, going to Delphos, had the boldness to put this question to the oracle (do not clamour, O Athenians); he asked whether there existed any person wiser than I? And the oracle answered that there was no person wiser. And to this, since Chaerephon himself is dead, his brother will bear witness before you.

Observe now why I mention this; for I am now going to show you how the prejudice against me arose. Hearing the response of the oracle, I considered with myself, What can it mean? what is its hidden significance? for I am not conscious to myself of being wise in any thing, great or small; what, then, can the god mean by calling me the wisest of men? for his words cannot be falsehoods. And for a long time I was puzzled, but at last, with much difficulty, I hit upon a way of examining the matter. I went to one of those who are esteemed wise, thinking that here, if anywhere, I should prove the oracle to be wrong, and be able to say to it, "Here is a man wiser than I." After examining this man (I need not mention his name, but he was one of the politicians) and conversing with him, it was my opinion that this man *seemed* to many others, and especially to himself, to be wise, but *was* not so. Thereupon I tried to convince him that he thought himself wise, and was not. By this means I offended him, and many of the bystanders. When I went away, I said to myself, "I am wiser than this man: for neither of us, it would seem, knows any thing valuable; but he, not knowing, fancies he does know: I, as I really do not know, so I do not think I know. I seem, therefore, to be, in one small matter, wiser than he, viz., in not thinking that I know what in truth I know not. After this I went to another,

\* An allusion to the secession of the Athenian *plebs* from the dominion of the Thirty Tyrants, and their return under Thrasybulus.

who was esteemed still wiser than he, and came to the same result ; and by this I affronted him too, and many others. I went on in the same manner, perceiving, with sorrow and fear, that I was making enemies ; but it seemed necessary to postpone all other considerations to the service of the god ; and, therefore, to seek for the meaning of the oracle, by going to all who appeared to know any thing. And, O Athenians (for I must speak the truth), the impression made on me was this : The persons of most reputation seemed to me to be nearly the most deficient of all ; other persons, of much smaller account, seemed much more rational people.

I must relate to you my wanderings, and the labours I underwent, that the truth of the oracle might be fairly tested. When I had done with the politicians, I went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and others, thinking that I should surely find myself less knowing than they. Taking up those of their poems which appeared to me the most laboured, I asked them (that I might at the same time learn something from them) what these poems meant ? I am ashamed, O Athenians, to say the truth, but I must say it ; there was scarcely a person present who could not have spoken better than they, concerning their own poems. I soon found, that what the poets do, they accomplish, not by wisdom, but by a kind of natural turn, and an enthusiasm like that of prophets and those who utter oracles ; for these, too, speak many fine things, but do not know one particle of what they speak. The poets seemed to me to be in a similar case. And I perceived, at the same time, that, on account of their poetry, they fancied themselves the wisest of mankind in other things, in which they were not so. I left them, therefore, thinking myself to have the same superiority over them which I had over the politicians. Lastly, I resorted to the artificers ; for I was conscious that I myself knew, in a manner, nothing at all, but I was aware that I should find them knowing many valuable things. And in this I was not mistaken ; they knew things which I knew not, and were so far wiser than I. But they appeared to me to fall into the same error as the poets ; each, because he was skilled in his own art, insisted upon being the wisest man in other and the greatest things ; and this mistake of theirs overshadowed what they possessed of wisdom. So that when I asked myself, by way of verifying the oracle, whether I would rather be as I now am, equally without their wisdom and their ignorance, or take the one with the other, I answered that it was better for me to be as I am

From this search, O Athenians, the consequences to me have been, on the one hand, many enmities, and of the most formidable kind, which have brought upon me many false imputations ; but, on the other hand, the name and general repute of a wise man. For the bystanders, on each occasion, imagine that I myself am

wise in those things in which I refute the false pretensions of others. The truth, however, O Athenians, is (I suspect) that the god alone is wise, and that his meaning in the oracle, was, that human wisdom is worth little or nothing: the name of Socrates seems to have been introduced, not for commendation, but for a mere example, as if it had been said, He, O men, is the wisest among you, who, like Socrates, knows that all his attainments in wisdom amount in reality to nothing. Meanwhile, I still, for the honour of the god, continue my search, and examine every one, whether a citizen or a stranger, whom I think likely to be a wise man: and when I find that he is not so, I prove that he is not, and so justify the oracle: and by reason of this occupation, I have no leisure to transact any business of moment, either for the state or for my own private benefit, but am in the depth of poverty from having devoted myself to the service of the god.

Besides this, the young men, those who have most leisure, the sons of the rich, take pleasure in following me, liking to hear the men probed and sifted; and they themselves often imitate me, and attempt to examine others; and they find, I imagine, great abundance of persons who fancy themselves knowing, but who really know either very little, or nothing. Those who are thus examined, are angry with me, not with themselves, and say that there is one Socrates, a wicked man, who corrupts the youth. And when any one asks them, by what practices, or by what instructions? they have nothing to say; for they do not know: but, not to seem at a loss, they are ready with the imputations which are always at hand to be cast upon all who philosophise, of studying the sky, and the parts under ground, and not believing in gods, and making the worse appear the better reason. They do not, I fancy, like to say the truth, that they have been convicted of pretending to knowledge without having any. Being, however, jealous of their reputation, and being much in earnest, and many in number, and speaking with premeditation and in a plausible manner about me, they have filled your ears with false notions of me, from an early period. Of these people, Melitus, Anytus, and Lycon, are those who have now set upon me: Melitus to avenge the cause of the poets, Anytus that of the artificers and the politicians, Lycon that of the orators.\* So that, as I said at first, I shall wonder if I am able, in so short a time, to expel from your minds a prejudice of such long standing.

This, O Athenians, is the truth; and I have said it, neither dissembling nor disguising any thing, great or small, although I know that to this very freespokenness I owe my enemies; which is a sign that I speak truth, and that the causes of the prejudice

\* These were the three accusers of Socrates. The first was a tragic poet, the second a currier, of great wealth and influence in public affairs, the third an orator. Melitus, the first of the three, was the ostensible prosecutor.

against me are those I have mentioned. And if, either now or hereafter, you examine into the matter, so you will find it.

To the accusations, then, which were brought against me by my first accusers, let this be a sufficient reply. I will now attempt to reply to Melitus, the good and patriotic, as he professes himself; and the rest.

These being a new set of accusers, let us look at their charges, as we did at those of the others. "Socrates," they say, "is guilty of corrupting the youth, and not acknowledging the gods whom the state acknowledges, but other new *δαίμόνια* \* [divinities, daemons, or things relating to daemons]." Such is the charge: and of this charge let us examine each separate part. He says, then, that I am guilty of corrupting the youth. But I, O Athenians, say that Melitus is guilty of solemn trifling; bringing men with so much levity before a criminal tribunal, and pretending to be earnestly concerned about things which he never paid the slightest attention to. That this is so, I will endeavour to prove to you.

Come hither, O Melitus, and answer me: You are very anxious that the young may be as good as possible?

MELITUS: I am.

SOCRATES: Come then, tell the tribunal, who is it that makes them good? for it is plain that you know, since you are so concerned about them. You have found who it is that corrupts them, you say, and have pointed him out and brought him hither: now point out who makes them better. Do you see, O Melitus, that you are silent and cannot tell. Is not this shameful, and a sufficient proof that, as I say, you have never concerned yourself about the matter? But say, my good friend, who it is that makes them better?

M.: The laws.

S.: That was not what I meant, O most excellent person. I asked what *man*? a man who in the first place, knows the very thing you mention, the laws.

M.: These, O Socrates, whom you now see; the judges.

S.: How, O Melitus? Are these people able to educate the young and make them better?

M.: Most certainly.

S.: All of them? or only some?

M.: All.

S.: You say well, by Juno, and there is an ample supply of benefactors.† And the bystanders? Are they also instructors of youth?

\* We give this word in the original language, because, as will presently be seen, the argument turns in part upon the vagueness of its signification. There is no word of exactly similar vagueness in the English language.

† The principal Athenian court of criminal justice, the Helæia, was a multitudinous assembly, consisting of more than 1000 citizens.

M.: They also.

S.: And the senators? \*

M.: The senators likewise.

S.: And the members of the assembly of the people? they do not corrupt the youth? or do they too, one and all, make them better?

M.: They do.

S.: Then it seems, all the Athenians make the youth good and virtuous except me; I alone corrupt them. Do you assert this?

M.: Most certainly I do.

S.: I am a very unlucky person, according to you. And tell me: do you think this is also the case with horses? Are those who make them better, all mankind; and is there one single person who spoils them? Or is the case quite the reverse; one, or a very few (those who have attended to the subject) capable of making them better; the many, if they try their hand upon horses, spoiling them? Is it not so, O Melitus, both with regard to horses and all other animals? Certainly, whether you and Anytus say so or not. It would be a very happy thing for the youth if there were but one person who spoils them, and all others benefited them. But you have sufficiently shown, O Melitus, that you never bestowed a thought upon the instructions of youth; but have yourself been utterly indifferent to the matters about which you accuse me.

Tell us again, O Melitus; is it better to have good, or wicked people for our fellow-citizens? Answer, friend; the question I ask is not difficult. Are not the wicked always doing some evil to those who are nearest to them, the good always doing some good?

M.: Undoubtedly.

S.: Is there any one who would rather be hurt than benefited by those he associates with? Answer, most excellent person: for the law, too, bids you answer. Does any one wish to be hurt?

M.: No, certainly.

S.: Well, then: do you bring me here on the charge of corrupting the youth, and making them wicked, intentionally, or unintentionally?

M.: Intentionally.

S.: What! are you, O Melitus, at your age, so much wiser than I at mine, that *you* know the wicked to be always doing some hurt, the good always some good, to those who are nearest to them; but *I* am so ignorant as not to know that if I make any of those with whom I associate wicked, I am in danger of suffering some evil from them, and, therefore, as you affirm, intentionally do this great evil? I do not believe this, O Melitus, nor, I think, will any other human being. Either I do not corrupt the youth, or

\* *βουλευταί*, the members of the council of five hundred.

if I do, it is unintentionally, and either way you are a calumniator. But if I corrupt them unintentionally, it is not the law to bring men here for such offences when unintentional, but to instruct them and admonish them in private; for it is evident that what I do unintentionally, I shall cease doing if I am taught better. But you avoided conversing with me and instructing me, and have now brought me here, whither the law ordains to bring those who require punishment, not teaching.

What I affirmed, O Athenians, is already evident, that Melitus never gave himself a moment's concern about these matters. But yet tell us, O Melitus, *how* you say that I corrupt the youth? In the manner which you mention in the indictment, viz., by teaching them not to acknowledge the gods whom the state acknowledges, but other new *δαίμονια*?

M.: Most certainly, I affirm it.

S.: By those gods, O Melitus, who are now in question, I pray you explain yourself more clearly. I cannot make out which of two things you say. Is it that I teach the youth to believe that there are gods, and am myself not altogether an atheist, but believe in gods, though not the same whom the state acknowledges, but others; and is this your charge against me, that I believe in *other* gods? or do you assert that I do not believe in any gods at all, and that I teach others the same?

M.: That is what I assert; you believe in no gods at all.

S.: Most wonderful Melitus, what is this you say! I do not, then, like the rest of mankind, believe the sun and moon to be gods?

M.: No, by Jupiter, O Athenians: for he says that the sun is of stone, and the moon of earth.

S.: You fancy you are accusing Anaxagoras, most worthy Melitus: and you have such a contempt for these judges, and think them so ignorant of letters, as not to know that the writings of Anaxagoras, of Clazomene, are full of this sort of doctrines. So, then, the youth learn from me, what they may buy sometimes at the theatre \* for one drachma, and may then laugh at Socrates if he pretend that they are his, especially being so paradoxical. So you really think that I do not believe in any gods?

M.: In none at all.

S.: You are incredulous, O Melitus; you do not even give credence to your own word. This man, O Athenians, seems to me to be exceedingly self-willed and insolent, and to have brought this prosecution against me from self-will and insolence, and youthful levity. It looks like a trial of ingenuity; as if he had said to himself: Will the wise Socrates find out the inconsistency

\* The commentators explain this passage as an allusion to the practice, not unfrequent with the dramatic poets (especially Euripides), of introducing on the scene sentiments borrowed from the writings of the philosophers.



in what I say, or shall I succeed in cheating him, and the rest of them? For he contradicts himself in the very words of the accusation; saying, in fact, this "Socrates is guilty of not believing in gods, but believing in gods." This looks like a jest. Attend then, O Athenians, that you may know what I mean. and do you answer, O Melitus. You, O Athenians, as I begged you at first, remember not to be clamorous if I speak in my own usual manner.

Is there any one, O Melitus, who believes that there are human *things*, but does not believe that there are men? Answer, O Athenians, and do not clamour. Does any one believe that there are *things* relating to horses, but not believe that there are horses? or that there are things relating to music, but not musicians? Nobody, O best of men; for if you will not answer, I will answer to you and to the judges. But answer the next question. Does any one believe that there are things relating to daemons, but does not believe in daemons?

M : No.

S : How much good you have done, by answering with so much reluctance, and not until the judges obliged you. You say then, that I believe, and teach, that there are things relating to daemons, no matter whether new or old. I therefore, according to you, believe in things relating to daemons, and thus you have sworn to in the indictment. But if I believe in the existence of things relating to daemons, I must needs believe in the existence of daemons: is it not so? It is: for as you will not answer, I consider you as assenting. But do we not regard daemons as either gods or the offspring of gods? Do we, or not?

M : Yes.

S : Then if I believe in daemons, as you say; and if daemons are a kind of gods, this is the riddle I said you were playing off upon us, saying that I, not believing in gods, do nevertheless believe in gods, since I believe in daemons. But if daemons are the offspring of the gods, by the nymphs, as they say, or in any other way, what human creature can believe that there exists offspring of gods, but no gods? It would be as absurd as to believe that there exists offspring of horses and asses, namely mules, but that there are no horses or asses. It is impossible, O Melitus, that you can have brought such an accusation for any purpose but to try us, or because you could find nothing true to accuse me of. That you should be able to persuade any person in his senses that the same person can think that there are things belonging to daemons and gods, and yet no daemons, nor gods, nor demi-gods, is impossible.

That I am not guilty, O Athenians, according to the accusation of Melitus, does not seem to need much proof: what I have said is sufficient. But what I have already told you, that I am in much odium, and with many persons, you well know to be true. And

this is what will cause my condemnation, if I be condemned: not Melitus nor Anytus, but the prejudice and calumny in the minds of the many: which has been the cause of condemnation to many other and good men, and will continue to be so, and there is no fear that I shall be the last.

Perhaps, now, some one may say, "Art thou not then ashamed, O Socrates, of practising a pursuit from which thou art now in danger of death?" To such a person I may justly make answer, "Thou speakest not well, O friend, if thou thinkest that a man should calculate the chances of living or dying (altogether an unimportant matter); instead of considering this only, when he does anything, whether what he does be just or unjust, the act of a good or of a bad man. For by thy way of thinking, the demigods who perished at Troy are worthy of no admiration; even the son of Thetis, who so despised danger in comparison with any dishonour, that when his mother, a goddess, said to him when eager to slay Hector, 'My son, if thou avenge thy friend Patroclus, and destroy Hector, thou thyself wilt die,' he, fearing much more to live unworthy and not avenge his friends than to die, answered, 'May I die immediately, after punishing the man who has injured me, that I may not remain the scoff of my countrymen, a burthen to the earth.'"

Thus it is, O Athenians: wheresoever our post is—whether we choose it, thinking it the best, or are placed in it by a superior—there, as I hold, we ought to remain, and suffer all chances, neither reckoning death nor any other consequence as worse than dishonour. I, therefore, should be greatly in the wrong, O Athenians, if when I was commanded by the superiors whom you set over me, at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium,\* I remained (like other people) where those superiors posted me, and perilled my life; but when, as I believed, the god commanded me, and bade me pass my life in philosophising, and examining myself and others, then, fearing either death or anything else, I should abandon my post. Then, indeed, might I with justice be brought before the tribunal, and accused of not believing in gods; if I disobeyed their oracles, and feared death, and thought myself wise, not being so. To be afraid of death, O Athenians, is to fancy ourselves wise, not begin so; for it is to fancy that we know what we do not know. No one knows whether death is not the greatest possible good to man. But people fear it, as if they knew it to be the greatest of evils. What is this but the most discreditable ignorance, to think we know what we know not? I, O Athenians, differ perhaps in this from persons in general (and if I am wiser than any other person it is probably in this) that not knowing sufficiently about a future state, I do not fancy I know. This,

\* Allusion to battles and sieges, well known to all readers of Grecian history, and at which Socrates had eminently distinguished himself.

however, I do know; that to do injustice, and to resist the injunctions of one who is better than myself, be he god or man, is evil and disgraceful. I shall not, therefore, fly to the evils which I know to be evils, from fear of that which, for aught I know, may be a good.

If, therefore, you were to acquit me (in spite of the predictions of Anytus, who said that either I ought not to have been tried, or if tried, it is impossible not to put me to death, since if I escape, all your sons will practise the instructions of Socrates, and be ruined); if, to prevent these consequences, you should say to me, "O Socrates, we will now, in spite of what Anytus said, let you off, but upon condition that you shall no longer persevere in your search, in your philosophising; if you are again convicted of doing so, you shall be put to death"—If, I say, you should let me off on these conditions, I should say to you—O Athenians, I love and cherish you, but I will obey the god rather than you; and as long as I breathe, and it is not out of my power, I will not cease to philosophise, and to exhort you to philosophy, and point out the way to whomsoever among you I fall in with; saying, as I am wont, "O most worthy person, art thou, an Athenian, of the greatest city and the most celebrated for wisdom and power, not ashamed that thou studiest to possess as much money as possible, and reputation, and honour, but concernest not thyself even to the smallest degree about Intellect, and Truth, and the well-being of thy mental nature?" And if any of you shall dispute the fact, and say that he does concern himself about these things, I will not let him off, or depart, but will question him, and examine, and confute him; and if he seem to me not to possess virtue, but to assert that he does, I will reproach him for valuing least what is highest worth, and highest what is most worthless. This will I do both to young and old, whomsoever I meet with; to citizen and stranger, but most to my fellow-citizens, as connected with me by a nearer tie. For these, as you well know, are the commands of the god. And to me it appears, that no good can happen to the state greater than my service of the god: for I pass my whole time doing nothing whatever but inciting you, both the young and the old, to care neither for body nor estate in preference to, nor in comparison with, the excellence of the soul; telling you that wealth does not produce virtue, but virtue wealth, and all other good things, to mankind, both collectively and individually. If, then, saying these things, I corrupt the youth, these things must be noxious: for if any one asserts that I say any other things than these, he speaks falsely. I say, therefore, O Athenians, whether you believe Anytus or not, whether you acquit me or not, let it be with the knowledge that I shall do no other things than these—not though I should die many deaths.

Do not clamour, O Athenians, but abide by what I requested

of you, not to bawl out against what I say, but to listen to it; and I think you will be the better for hearing it. I have still some other things to say, at which you will, perhaps, cry out; but I exhort you not to do so. Know well, O Athenians, that if you put me to death, being such as I describe myself, you will not hurt me more than you will hurt yourselves. Me Anytus and Melitus will not hurt; they cannot. It is not permitted that a better man should be hurt by a worse. Kill me, or exile me, or deprive me of civic rights, they may. And these, to Melitus, perhaps, and to others as well as him, may appear great evils; but not to me. To do what he is now doing, to attempt to kill another man unjustly, seems to me a far greater evil. Nor am I now, O Athenians, as you may perhaps suppose, pleading for myself—far from it—but for you; that you may not, by condemning me, commit a crime against the gift which the god has given to you. For if you kill me, you will not easily find another person like me, who in sober truth (though it may sound ridiculous) am sent by the god to this city, as to a strong and generous horse, who is somewhat sluggish from his size, and requires to be stimulated by a stinging insect. The god, as it seems to me, has given me to you as such an insect, to goad you by persuasions and reproaches, settling upon one of you after another. You will not, O Athenians, easily find another such man. and therefore, if you take my advice, you will spare me. But you, perhaps, being angry, like sleepers awakened, will strike at me, and being persuaded by Anytus, will inconsiderately put me to death; and then pass the remainder of your lives in slumber, unless the god in his care for you should send to you some one else.

That I am such a person as one bestowed on you by the god might be expected to be, you may judge from this: it is not like the ways of mere humanity, to neglect all my own concerns, and let my private affairs be so many years uncared for, devoting myself to *your* interests; seeking each of you, as if I were his father or his elder brother, and inciting him to the pursuit of virtue. If I gained anything by it, and gave these exhortations for pay or reward, there would be something intelligible in it. But now you yourselves see, that my accusers, shameless as they have shown themselves in all their other accusations, could not carry their shamelessness so far as to affirm, producing testimony, that I ever took or asked reward from any one: for I have truly a good and sufficient witness to my assertion, my poverty.

Perhaps it may appear strange that I go about and busy myself with giving these exhortations in private, but do not venture to come forward in public and advise the people in the public assembly. The cause of this is, what you have often heard me speak of; that I have a divine (or daemonic) monitor; which Melitus alluded to in the indictment, and ludicrously perverted.

This is a voice, which from my childhood upwards has occasionally visited me, always to dissuade me from something which I was about to do, but never instigating me to any thing. It is this voice which opposes my meddling in public affairs. And rightly, in my opinion, has it done so: for I know, Athenians, that if I had long ago attempted to interfere in politics, I should long ago have perished, and done no good either to you or myself. And be not angry with me for saying the truth. It is impossible that any human being should escape destruction, who sincerely opposes himself to you, or to any other multitude, and strives to prevent many injustices and illegalities from being transacted in the state. He who means really to contend for the right, if he would be unharmed for even a short time, must keep to private, and avoid public life.

I will produce to you signal proofs of this; not words, but, what you must honour, deeds. Hear, then, the things which have happened to me; that you may know that I would never, from the fear of death, have succumbed to any one contrary to justice, and not succumbing, would inevitably have been destroyed. What I will tell you may sound arrogant and presuming; but it is true.

The only office I ever held in the state, O Athenians, was that of a member of the Senate of Five Hundred; and it fell to my tribe (the tribe Antiochis) to preside, when you decided that the ten generals, accused of not taking up the bodies of the slain in the seafight,\* should be tried collectively; an illegal decision, as since that time has become the opinion of you all. On that occasion, I alone of the Prytanes † resisted your doing any thing contrary to law. The orators cried out to indict me instantly and drag me to prison, and you assented by acclamation; but I preferred to run all risks on the side of justice and the law, rather than to join with you in an unjust resolve from fear of chains or death. This happened while the state was under a democracy. When an oligarchy succeeded, the Thirty sent for me and four others to the Tholus,‡ and commanded us to proceed to Salamis and bring from thence Leon, the Salaminian, that he might be put to death. They at that time gave such commands to many persons, wishing to compromise the greatest number of persons possible as accomplices in their proceedings. I then, not by word

\* The celebrated trial of the ten generals who gained the battle of Arginusae: one of the most disgraceful blots in the Athenian annals.

† Among the functions of the senate of Five Hundred was that of furnishing a committee of fifty (styled the Prytanes) to preside and take the suffrages of the people in the general assembly. The senate consisted of fifty members from each of the ten tribes; each tribe (i.e. its fifty representatives) performed the office of Prytanes in its turn.

‡ A public building at Athens, where the Thirty Tyrants, as we may infer from this passage, transacted business.

but by deed, proved that I do not care one jot for death, but every thing for avoiding any unjust or impious action. That government, powerful as it was, did not intimidate me into any act of injustice; but when we quitted the Tholus, the other four went to Salamis and brought Leon from thence, but I returned home. Perhaps this would have cost me my life, had not that government soon after been overthrown. To these facts I can produce many witnesses.

Do you think, then, that I could have lived so many years, if I had mingled in public affairs, and, as befits a good man, had always given my aid to the just cause, and made that, as I ought, my grand object? Far from it, O Athenians; neither I nor any other man. But I, throughout my whole life, and in whatever public transaction I may have been engaged in, shall always be found such as I am in private, never tolerating the slightest violation of justice, either in any one else, or in those whom my calumniators assert to be my disciples. But I have never been any one's teacher; though if any one, whether young or old, desired to stand by and listen to me, speaking and following my own path, I never grudged to allow him. Neither is it my practice to converse with people when they pay me money, and not otherwise; but I permit rich and poor alike to question me, or if they please, to answer my questions, and to hear what I have to say. And whether any of these turn out a good or a bad man, I cannot justly be held accountable,\* since I never taught nor undertook to teach them anything. If any one affirms that he ever learnt or heard from me in private, any thing but what all other persons have heard, be assured that he speaks falsely.

But why, then, do some persons take pleasure in frequenting my society? You have already heard, O Athenians; I have told you the whole truth, they like to hear those persons exposed, who fancy themselves wise and are not; for it is not unpleasant. But to me, as I affirm, it has been enjoined by the god to do this—enjoined in oracles, and in dreams, and in every other way in which divine ordinance commands anything to a human being.

These things, O Athenians, are true; and could easily be disproved, if they were not. For if I corrupt some of the young men, and have already corrupted others, they, if any of them growing older have perceived that I had given them evil counsels when young, ought to appear now, and charge me with it, and punish me; or if they were unwilling, some of their relations, their fathers or brothers, if these people have suffered any evil from me, should remember it now. There are many such persons

\* We are told in Xenophon's *Memorials of Socrates*, that nothing contributed more to his condemnation, than the fact that Critias (the chief of the abhorred Thirty) and Alcibiades, had, in their youth, been reckoned among his disciples.

present, whom I now see; Criton, my contemporary and member of the same ward, \* the father of Critobulus, here present; Lysanias, the father of Aeschines, who is present; Antiphon, the father of Epigenes; others, again, whose brothers have kept company with me; Nicostratus, the son of Theodotides, brother of Theodotus (Theodotus himself is dead, and therefore cannot have dissuaded his brother from appearing against me); Paralus, the son of Demodocus, whose brother Theages was; Ademantus, the son of Ariston, and brother of Plato here; Acontodorus, brother of this Apollodorus; and many others I could mention. Some one of these, Melitus should have produced as a witness; and if he then forgot, let him produce them now, and I will give place. But you will find the very contrary of this, O judges; they are all eager to assist me—the corrupter and injurer of their relatives, as Melitus and Anytus affirm. Those indeed, who have themselves been corrupted by me, might naturally enough be supposed to take my side: but the uncorrupted, some of them elderly men, the relatives of the others—what reason can they have for aiding me, but the right and just one, their knowledge that Melitus is a calumniator, and that I speak the truth?

These things, O Athenians, and such as these, are what I have to say in my defence. Perhaps some one among you may be displeased with me, when he bethinks himself that in the trial which preceded mine, the accused, though he had less at stake, entreated the judges, with many tears; and brought hither, to excite their pity, his children, and others of his relations and friends; while I shall do nothing of the kind, although the penalty which, as it may seem, I am in danger of, is the severest of all. Some of you, perhaps, thinking of these things, may feel harshly towards me, and may give an angry vote. If any one among you feels thus, which I hope is not the case, I think I may very properly hold the following discourse to him. I too, most worthy person, have relatives: I am not (as Homer says) sprung from an oak tree, or from a rock, but from human beings; and I have not only relations, but three sons, O Athenians; one of them a youth, the others still children. Nevertheless, I shall not, bringing any of them here, implore you to acquit me. And why? Not from pride, O Athenians, nor from disdain of you; but for this reason: whether I look upon death with courage or with fear is another matter: but with a view to our reputation, both mine and yours, and that of the city itself, it does not seem to me honourable that I should do such things at my age, and with such a name as I have, whether merited or not. Men certainly believe that Socrates is in some way superior to the multitude of mankind. It would be shameful if those among you who are esteemed superior to the rest, whether in wisdom or in courage, or in any other virtue, should conduct

\* δημότης.

themselves like so many others whom I have seen on their trial, and who might have been taken for people of some account, but who moved heaven and earth to be acquitted, as if it were something dreadful to die; as though they expected to be immortal unless you should put them to death. Such persons appear to me to bring discredit on the city; a foreigner might conclude that the most virtuous among the Athenians, they whom the Athenians select from themselves as the worthiest, for public offices and other honours, are in nothing superior to women. Such things, O Athenians, we, who are thought to be of some account, ought neither to do, nor if we did, ought you to suffer us, but, on the contrary, to show that you will much rather condemn those who enact these pathetic dramas, and make the city ridiculous, than those who refrain from them. And besides the discredit, it does not seem to me even just, to supplicate the judge, and escape by supplication, but to instruct and convince him. For the judge does not sit here to make a favour of justice, but impartially to inquire into it; and he has sworn not to gratify whomsoever he pleases, but to judge according to the laws. We, therefore, should not accustom you, nor should you let yourselves be accustomed, to violate your oaths: it would be impiety in both of us. Do not then, O Athenians, demand of me to do such things towards you as I deem to be neither beautiful, nor just, nor holy, especially as I am actually on trial for impiety. If I should work upon you and influence your decision by supplications, when you have sworn to do justice, I should indeed teach that you do not believe in gods, and my defence of myself would be an accusation against myself that I believe not in them. But far is this from the truth. I believe in them, O Athenians, as not one of my accusers does. And I commit to you and to the god to decide concerning me, in whatever way shall be best for you and for me.

#### AFTER THE VERDICT OF CONDEMNATION

Among many things, O Athenians, which prevent me from feeling indignant at your having condemned me, one is, that what has happened was not unexpected by me. Much rather do I wonder at the number of votes in my favour. I did not expect to be condemned by so small a majority, but by a large one: it now, however, appears, that if but three of the votes had been given differently, I should have escaped. As far as Melitus is concerned, I have escaped as it is: and it is even clear to every one, that if Anytus and Lycon had not appeared as my accusers, he would have been liable to the penalty of one thousand drachmae, not having obtained a fifth part of the votes.\*

\* To restrain frivolous and vexatious prosecutions, a law existed at Athens,



The penalty proposed by my accuser is death. What penalty shall I, on my part, propose? \* surely that which I deserve. Well, then, what do I deserve to suffer or to pay, because I never relaxed in instructing myself, but neglecting what the many care for, money-getting and household management, and military commands, and civil offices, and speech-making, and all the political clubs and societies in the city; thinking myself, in fact, too honest to follow these pursuits and be safe; I did not go where I could be of no use either to you or to myself, but went to each man individually, to confer on him the greatest of all benefits: attempting to persuade every one of you, to think of none of his own concerns till he had looked to making himself as good and as wise as possible; nor of the city's concerns till he had looked to making the city so; and to pursue all other things in a similar spirit. What, then, ought to be done to me for such conduct? Some good, O Athenians, if I am really to be treated according to my deserts; and a good of such a kind as beseems me. What, then, beseems a man in poor circumstances, your benefactor, and requiring leisure to prosecute his exhortations? There is nothing, O Athenians, which would be so suitable for such a man to receive, as a maintenance at the public expense.† It would befit *him* much better than any of you who may have carried away the prize of horse- or chariot-racing at the Olympic contests. For, such a man makes you only *seem* happy, but I make you *be* so: and he does not require a maintenance, but I do. If, therefore, I must estimate myself justly according to my deserts, I rate myself at a maintenance in the Prytaneum.

Perhaps I seem to you, in saying this, as in what I said about supplications and entreaty, to be influenced by pride. The fact, however, is not so: but rather [the opposite], as I am now about to tell you. I know that I do not intentionally injure any one; but I am not able to convince you of it; for we have conversed together but a short time: if, indeed, it were the law with you, as in other countries, not to terminate capital trials in one day, but continue them through several, you could then have been convinced; but now, it is not easy, in a short time, to conquer strong prejudices. I then, being convinced that I wrong no one, cannot consent to wrong myself, by affirming that I am worthy of any evil, and pro-

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by which a penalty of one thousand drachmae was imposed on the accuser if he did not obtain a fifth part of the votes

\* After condemnation, the accused was at liberty to speak on the question of punishment; and, the question was put to him, at what penalty he himself estimated his offence. Τιμὰτα δ' οὖν μοι ὁ ἀνὴρ θανάτου. Ἐλεν, ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ τίς τις ὁμῶν ἀντιτιμήσομαι, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι;

† Ἐν πρυτανείῳ σιτεῖσθαι to be boarded in the Prytaneum (a public building in the Acropolis). This privilege was occasionally conferred upon public benefactors; and, among others, upon such citizens as, by gaining the Olympic prizes, were conceived to have conferred honour upon their country.

posing that any evil should be inflicted upon me as a penalty. From what fear should I do so? From the fear lest I should suffer what Melitus proposes? when I affirm that I know not whether it be an evil or a good? Shall I, then, choose something which I well know to be an evil, and propose that as the penalty? Imprisonment, for example? And why should I seek to live in a prison, at the mercy of every successive police officer? \* A fine? and imprisonment until I pay it? That would be the same thing; for I have no means of paying it. Shall I propose banishment? for perhaps you might sentence me to that. But I must be very fond of life, O Athenians, if I am so bad a calculator as not to compute that if you, who are my countrymen, have not been able to bear my ways and my sayings, but have found them burthen-some and invidious, and now seek to get rid of them, it is not likely that other people will bear them easily. Far from it, O Athenians. It would be an unworthy life for me, exiled at my age, to live in perpetual wanderings and banishments from one city to another. For, I well know, that whithersoever I go, the young men will listen to my discourses as they do here. And if I repel them, they, by their influence with the older people, will drive me from the place: but if I admit them, their fathers and relations will do it for their sake. Perhaps somebody may say, But canst thou not, O Socrates, going into exile, live there in peace and silence? Here it is that I have the hardest task to persuade you; for, if I say that this would be to disobey the god, and that I, therefore, cannot remain silent, you will think it ironical, and disbelieve it. And if, again, I say that the greatest good possible for man is, to discuss daily concerning virtue, and the other matters on which you hear me converse and examine myself and others, and that to live an unexamined life is not endurable, you will still less believe me. The fact, however, is as I say, but it is not easy to make it apparent.

I am not used to pronounce myself deserving of any evil. If I had money, I would estimate my penalty at as much money as I was able to pay, for it would have been no damage to me; but now—I have none; unless you are willing to fix the penalty at what I am able to pay. Perhaps I could pay as much as a silver mina: at this, therefore, I rate the penalty. Plato here, and Criton, and Critobulus, and Apollodorus, O Athenians, bid me rate it at thirty minae, and they undertake to be my sureties. I do so, therefore, and their security is adequate.

\* οἱ ἐπιδεα, the officers in charge of gaols, and prisoners; annually chosen by lot from among the people. They correspond to the *triumvi reiur capitalium* of the Romans.

the dead; what greater good can there be, O judges, than this? If, arriving in the other world, and leaving these people who call themselves judges, we shall see the real judges, who are said to judge there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and all other demigods who lived justly while they were alive, would it not be a noble journey? What would not any of you give to converse with Orpheus, and Musaeus, and Hesiod, and Homer? I would gladly die many times if this be true; since to me it would be a delightful residence when I had met with Palamedes, and the Telamonian Ajax, and any other of the ancients who perished in consequence of an unjust judgment. To compare my own fate with theirs, would not, I think, be disagreeable: and best of all, to live examining and interrogating the people there, as I have done here, to discover who among them are wise, and who think themselves so, but are not. How much would not one give, O judges, for an opportunity of examining him who led the great expedition to Troy; or Ulysses, or Sisyphus, or ten thousand others whom one could mention, both men and women, with whom to converse and associate there, and to examine them, would be the height of happiness. They do not, there, put one to death for such things; for the people there are happier than the people here, both in other things, and in this, that when once there they are immortal; if what we are told is true.

It behoves you, O judges, to be of good cheer concerning death; and to fix this truth in your minds, that to a good man, whether he die or live, nothing is evil, nor are his affairs neglected by the gods; neither did what has happened to me occur spontaneously, but it is evident to me that to die, and come to an end now, was most for my good. For this reason was it that the sign did not interpose to check me; and I do not much complain of my accusers, nor of those who condemned me. Though they, indeed, accused and condemned me not with any such intention, but purposing to do me harm: and for this it is fit to blame them.

Thus much, however, I beg of them: When my sons grow up, punish them, O Athenians, by tormenting them as I tormented you, if they shall seem to study riches, or any other ends, in preference to virtue. And if they are thought to be something, being really nothing, reproach them as I have reproached you, for not attending to what they ought, and fancying themselves something when they are good for nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons shall have received what is just at your hands.

It is now time that we depart, I to die, you to live; but which has the better destiny is unknown to all, except the god.



The direct and indirect influence of James Mill and of his son on English political and economic, on philosophical and ethical thought, and on the theory of psychology and even education, has been frequently and fairly assessed. But the "Hellenizing tendency"<sup>1</sup> of James Mill's mind and its influence has been neglected to a surprising extent. Yet it was through him that the nineteenth-century Humanism was brought into living communion with the classic Humanism from which it derived its moral force.

To achieve this required more original thinking than is apparent to us to-day. The universities of James Mill's youth deserved the blame and more which, forty years later, his son showered upon their instruction in the classics. "Strongholds . . . of all prejudices,"<sup>2</sup> they bestowed

attention upon the various branches of classical acquirement in exactly the reverse order to that which would be observed by persons who valued the ancient authors for what is valuable in them: namely, upon the mere niceties of language first; next, upon a few of the poets; next (but at a great distance), some of the historians; next (but at a still greater interval), the orators; last of all, and just above nothing, the philosophers.<sup>3</sup>

Plato was considered "an impractical dreamer, or, worse still, as the creator of a mystical theology."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, as a student of Divinity at Edinburgh, we find James Mill, in his second session, beginning to read *Platonis Opera*, and for many weeks to follow devoting the better part of his time to their study.<sup>5</sup> For ever after, James Mill remained imbued with the ethical spirit of the ancients. They awakened in him a sustained enthusiasm which, in his estimation, it is quite beyond the power of modern historians to communicate:—

The Ancients, unlike the modern, lay the greatest stress on the lessons of morality in their conception of history, and it is well known that they excel in celebrating public spirit as a high virtue<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Benn, *Modern England*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> L. Stephen, *English Utilitarians*, vol. iii, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequent text, p. 41

<sup>4</sup> A. W. Benn, *English Rationalism*, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> A. Bain, *James Mill*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> James Mill, *Review of Fox's Unfinished History of the Revolution of 1688*.

The re-discovery of the spirit of the Ancients as a moral force, as a power making for character, is all James Mill's own; the Greek scholars of his time betray no knowledge of it. His Greek scholarship was recognized in later years when he was suggested as a candidate for the Greek Chair at Glasgow.

In a curious way James Mill's Puritan heritage of sternness and a high sense of duty blended themselves with Plato's humanism while detaching themselves at the same time from all religious creeds. He gave up the ministry for conscientious reasons and removed to London to rear a growing family by his pen. His character and views of life, thus formed, are described by his son:—

My father's moral convictions, wholly dis severed from religion, were very much of the character of those of the Greek philosophers; and were delivered with the force and decision which characterised all that came from him. . . .

In his views of life he partook of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Cynic, not in the modern, but the ancient sense of the word. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated. His standard of morals was Epicurean, inasmuch as it was utilitarian, taking as the exclusive test of right and wrong, the tendency of actions to produce pleasure or pain. But he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure . . . The greater number of miscarriages in life, he considered to be attributable to the overvaluing of pleasures. Accordingly, temperance, in the large sense intended by the Greek philosophers—stopping short at the point of moderation in all indulgences—was with him, as with them, almost the central point of educational precept. . . .

For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. "The intense" was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great stress laid upon feeling.<sup>1</sup>

This was the man who believed in the possibility and deliberately set himself the task of "making a man" of his first-born son.

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, pp 39–41.